United Nations A/C.1/50/PV.6

General Assembly
Fiftieth Session

Official Records

First Committee
6th Meeting
Wednesday, 18 October 1995, 3 p.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Erdenechuluun ..... (Mongolia)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda items 57 to 81 *(continued)*

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. N'Dry (Côte d'Ivoire) (*interpretation from French*): First of all, I should like to extend to you, Mr. Chairman, on behalf of the delegation of Côte d'Ivoire, our congratulations on your election. We would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau, as well as your eminent predecessor.

The end of the cold war made possible the emergence of a new concept of security, based not only on its military aspects — that is to say, general and complete disarmament — but also on economic and social aspects of that peace to which we all aspire. My country was pleased at the enhanced role of the United Nations in the field of disarmament, which today is envisaged from a broader standpoint than that of the agreements on the reduction of armaments concluded between the major military Powers. Over the past few years, there have been positive developments with regard to the control of nuclear weapons. We believe that tangible progress can be achieved if States will demonstrate true political determination and will, and this is encouraging.

Among the positive results attained I would like to mention the ratification and entry into force of the START I Treaty. We hope that this will facilitate the ratification in the near future of the START II Treaty, which provides for the reduction by the United States and Russia of two thirds of their nuclear strategic warheads and the elimination, over a 10-year period, of multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRVs).

I would also like to mention the historic decision adopted by 174 States on 11 May 1995 to extend indefinitely the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). This constitutes a major achievement in the right direction — that is, towards a safer world in which the idea of the total elimination of nuclear weapons would no longer appear utopian. However, to attain this ultimate objective, the international community must set up conditions of confidence. Hence, Côte d'Ivoire, which is a peace-loving country, encourages the States that have not yet done so to adhere to the NPT.

The nuclear non-proliferation regime can be viable only with the establishment of regional denuclearization mechanisms. We therefore welcome the entry into force of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco), which makes the region of Latin America and the Caribbean the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in the world. Our continent of Africa is on the right path. Hence, my country is pleased that the text establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa has been finalized and this text will be signed in the near future.

With respect to chemical weapons, my delegation is pleased to announce that just recently, Côte d'Ivoire ratified the Convention on the Prohibition on the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. My country's instruments of ratification of this important disarmament text will be

95-86365 (E)

This record contains the original texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

deposited with the Secretary-General of the United Nations in the very near future.

According to various United Nations documents on disarmament, there are more than 100 million land-mines scattered over all the continents, and particularly in Africa. We know the suffering this kind of device can cause for the civilian population, and what the consequences are on the general economic situation of the countries that are victims of this indiscriminate weapon. Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the efforts made by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to halt the planting of such mines, in particular the recent establishment of a fund for assistance in demining. We are pleased at the establishment by certain countries of a moratorium on the production and exportation of anti-personnel land-mines but we must recognize the fact that such a decision cannot be more than a transitory measure reflecting a will to arrive at a more ambitious solution.

My delegation feels it is time to think about an international agreement prohibiting the production, utilization and transfer of mines. This would, no doubt, be an arduous enterprise because of the commercial interests involved, and because such mines are weapons that are easy to manufacture. However, this challenge can be met if we show determination and true political will. The proposal for a revision of Protocol II to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects deserves our attention. Such a revision should be based on clear and precise rules applicable to all types of conflicts.

It is pleasing to see that we are heading more and more towards a new strategy of disarmament, one which would take account of a regional approach to the problem. That, in our opinion, is a more pragmatic view conducive to transparency and the establishment of confidence-building measures with a view to halting the proliferation of weapons. Thus, the political situation and security conditions could be taken more into account in each particular region.

Africa south of the Sahara as a whole — and the West African subregion in particular — is now experiencing a state of insecurity characterized by the existence of small, illegal arms, both in urban centres and in rural areas. This is promoting large-scale banditry, the forming of armed bands, and a general tendency towards self-defence by populations whose security is threatened.

We are pleased, in this respect, at the cooperation recently established between the United Nations and the Republic of Mali on means of putting an end to this phenomenon. Côte d'Ivoire, as a neighbour of Mali, is also concerned at this problem. My country would like to reaffirm solemnly its commitment to regional cooperation in regard to disarmament, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 44/117 B, in which the Assembly

> "encourages all States to consider and develop as far as possible, regional solutions in the matter of arms reduction and disarmament".

The end of ideological confrontation between the two blocs rightly gave rise to the expectation or the hope that resources, which had been devoted to military purposes would now be reallocated to sectors of social and economic development and to protection of the environment. Unfortunately, we have had to recognize that this view is not shared by all. We do not however despair of reaching this objective. Côte d'Ivoire remains convinced that questions relating to disarmament and thus to international security cannot be discussed in isolation from those of economic and social development, and that taking them duly into account seems absolutely essential.

Ms. Arystanbekova (Kazakstan) (*interpretation from Russian*): Allow me on behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Kazakstan to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the lofty post of Chairman of the First Committee, to extend our congratulations to all members of the Bureau, and to express our conviction that under your leadership the Committee will be able to make the most expeditious decisions on its traditionally complicated agenda. I would like to assure you that you can count on the full cooperation of the delegation of Kazakstan.

In June of this year, the President of the Republic of Kazakstan Mr. Nursultan Nazarbaev, speaking at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva for the first time, set forth a new concept of disarmament processes and international security, in accordance with the new challenges, and stated that the existing systems of international security needed a fresh approach and needed to be fundamentally improved in the light of the new geopolitical situation and geo-economic trends at the close of the century.

Our Head of State laid particular emphasis on the fact that the practical measures taken by the Republic of Kazakstan in the area of international security and disarmament were designed primarily to ensure its

unconditional and full compliance with all the commitments it had entered into under international treaties and agreements in this field.

After achieving independence, Kazakstan adopted a historic decision to reject its nuclear inheritance, which became an important precondition for the emergence of our State as a natural and inalienable part of modern civilization. Kazakstan's repudiation of all types of nuclear weapons was a natural choice for our country, which had suffered so much from nuclear-weapon testing. It is now known that during the almost 45 years the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site was in use, and as a result of 459 explosions, including 113 in the atmosphere, more than 500,000 inhabitants of Kazakstan were exposed to radioactive radiation. These tests affected not only the lives and health of the population but also the ecological balance of our vast territory.

The second thing which influenced Kazakstan's decision to rid itself of nuclear weapons is the fact that the Republic's foreign policy is based on a pacific commitment to a generally accepted code of conduct in matters connected with international security. Weighing all these factors, the leadership of Kazakstan adopted a resolute policy aimed at eliminating nuclear weapons.

In December 1993, the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Kazakstan ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). With its adherence to the Treaty Kazakstan turned a page on the part of its history connected with the testing and deployment of nuclear weapons on its territory.

Kazakstan confirmed its commitment to international obligations by being the first to ratify the START I Treaty and the Lisbon Protocol. We were the first of the Commonwealth of Independent States to withdraw all tactical weapons from our territory, almost five years ago.

In April of this year, the withdrawal of more than 1,200 units of nuclear warheads of intercontinental ballistic missiles from our territory was completed. On 30 May 1995, the last remaining underground nuclear device at the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site was destroyed. Now Kazakstan is totally free of nuclear weapons.

The decision of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the NPT with regard to the indefinite extension of the Treaty has gone down as a truly historic decision and we share the view of the Secretary-General, as expressed in his report on the work of the Organization, that that decision and the other commitments entered into by States Parties, which were reflected in the documents of the Conference, have strengthened the non-proliferation regime and made a substantial contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security.

On the basis of the need for the comprehensive strengthening of the non-proliferation regime and the establishment of favourable preconditions for eliminating nuclear weapons, Kazakstan advocates the early conclusion of negotiations in Geneva on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

Kazakstan has shut down the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site for good and has made a historic contribution to the process leading to a nuclear-test ban. Kazakstan favours a ban on all nuclear-weapons tests, including tests for peaceful purposes. For its part, our Republic is ready to participate in a practical way to enhance the monitoring of observance of the future comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty. Speaking at the session of the Conference on Disarmament, our Head of State proposed the inclusion of three modern seismic stations situated in Kazakstan in a global monitoring network which could provide effective control.

From the rostrum of the Conference on Disarmament, President Nazarbaev appealed to nuclear-weapon States to extend the moratorium on nuclear-weapon tests until the relevant treaty is signed and he urged those who continued tests to respect the moratorium.

In his statement on 12 April 1995, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakstan welcomed the adoption of Security Council resolution 984 (1995) on security assurances by nuclear-weapon States to non-nuclear States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Kazakstan fully supports the proposal that security assurances should carry the mandatory legal force of an international instrument. One of the possible solutions to this question, as suggested in the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakstan at the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, could be the adoption of a protocol on security assurances which would be an integral part of the Treaty itself.

Kazakstan supports the agreed mandate for the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva to hold negotiations on a treaty on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We must begin negotiations on halting the

production of such material and we must bring into those negotiations all States that possess such material, especially the nuclear-weapon States. Equally necessary is the improvement of inspections carried out by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Having ratified the Agreement with the IAEA for the Application of Safeguards in connection with the NPT, Kazakstan became part of an international system of control over the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and its components.

We share the concern expressed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations at the illicit trafficking in nuclear materials which is still going on, despite the fact that the States Parties to the NPT have decided on the indefinite extension of the Treaty and we support the efforts of the IAEA to solve this problem. In this connection, implementation of the proposal made by the President of the Russian Federation, Mr. Boris Yeltsin, on the holding in the spring of 1996 of a meeting to discuss the problems of nuclear security could provide an important step towards joint efforts to prevent and prohibit the illicit trafficking in nuclear material.

Against the backdrop of a radical reduction in nuclear weapons, questions relating to the place and role of conventional armed forces and weapons in strengthening peace and maintaining stability should be looked at carefully. The signing of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) served to create a new climate of trust on the continent. Kazakstan supports the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and, since 1992, has provided the necessary information to that Register.

Kazakstan is one of the 159 States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) and is at this time preparing for its ratification. In accordance with the provisions of the Convention, our national legislation will be brought into line with it. It will be brought up to date in national terms, also.

Kazakstan attaches great importance to participation in international bodies concerned with security. This is a priority area of our foreign policy. In our opinion, the activities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe — of which my country is a member and the area of responsibility of which includes not only Europe but also Central Asia — have been very successful. Kazakstan is continuing its activities in implementation of the initiative of President Nazarbaev taken at the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly to convene a meeting on cooperation and confidence-building measures in Asia.

In this connection, I should like to inform the Committee that a second meeting of the special working group established to prepare such a meeting, in which 15 Asian countries participated, took place in September in Alma-Ata. Two official documents were adopted as well as a decision to accelerate efforts to prepare for the meeting at the level of Heads of foreign political ministries of the countries involved.

The fiftieth session of the General Assembly marks a historic anniversary and, in that context, the current discussion in the First Committee of important issues of disarmament and security has a priority place on the international agenda. It is of especial importance in preparing joint practical approaches to the solution of these burning problems of the contemporary world. As in the past, the delegation of Kazakstan is prepared to cooperate in a constructive way with our colleagues in the First Committee to achieve these goals.

Mr. Yumjav (Mongolia): At the crossroads of the two millenniums the world find itself at a historic juncture, relieved of the cold-war past and facing a future that holds both opportunities and challenges. This situation calls for revamping our conventional notions of peace and development and adjusting them to today's realities. In this regard the Secretary-General's stimulating and farsighted reports "An Agenda for Peace" and "An Agenda for Development" and their subsequent supplements help greatly in our collective reflection on our vision of the future.

Although the world has been spared another holocaust, millions of lives have been lost in so-called local conflicts. Millions more are dying of poverty, hunger, utter deprivation and lack of access to basic health services. It is being increasingly recognized that the security of the rich is threatened by the insecurity of the poor.

The year of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations has seen a number of positive developments in the field of disarmament. The most important event of 1995 in that field was the successful outcome of the Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. We hope that the package of decisions adopted by the Conference will lay a sound basis for

furthering the goal of complete elimination of nuclear weapons.

The document "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament" adopted by the Review Conference sets the target date for the completion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty at not later than 1996. We are gratified to note that progress along that road has been made during this year's session of the Conference on Disarmament. The Ad Hoc Committee of the Conference on Disarmament has done commendable work, particularly in the areas of the international monitoring system and on the implementing organization. A zero-yield comprehensive test ban announced by the United States and followed by France and the United Kingdom and relevant statements by the Russian Federation will help significantly to speed up the negotiations on the treaty. We are, however, cognizant of the fact that many substantive issues, such as entry into force, on-site inspection, the role of the International Data Centre and the issues of funding will have to be dealt with in a constructive and determined manner so that the negotiations can be concluded by the specified target date.

As regards the issue of banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear-weapon or other nuclear explosive purposes, it is important that the Conference on Disarmament agreed to establish an Ad Hoc Committee with a mandate to negotiate a treaty. But it is regrettable that the Conference failed to begin the work of that Ad Hoc Committee during its 1995 session. My delegation is of the view that a cut-off convention would be a significant contribution to nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

In the above-mentioned "Principles and Objectives" the nuclear-weapon States are also urged, pending the entry into force of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, to exercise utmost restraint on nuclear testing. We fully share the grave concern expressed by many delegations at the continuation and resumption of nuclear tests. Such tests, in our view, will have a negative bearing on the ongoing negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty. We urge all nuclear-weapon States to continue to eschew nuclear testing in order to maintain the present political climate that is favourable to the negotiations.

The underlying purpose of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will be served if the non-nuclear-weapon States are adequately assured against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. In this respect Security Council resolution 984 (1995) on security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States and the unilateral statements made by nuclear-weapon States are welcome developments, auguring well for the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime. But it is clear that further steps are needed in order to allay the concerns of the non-nuclear-weapon States. The non-nuclear-weapon States Parties to the NPT deserve nothing short of an internationally negotiated, legally binding document containing unconditional and unlimited assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

Mongolia is in favour of the early entry into force of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons on Their Destruction and its effective implementation. Therefore, we consider that early ratification of the Convention by its signatories, especially by major declared possessors of chemical weapons, is of especial importance. My delegation appreciates the work carried out by the Preparatory Committee of the Organization for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons with a view to stimulating the early ratification of the Convention. Mongolia deposited the instrument of ratification of the Convention early in 1995.

My delegation notes with satisfaction the progress made in the deliberations with regard to the establishment of a verification mechanism for the Biological Weapons Convention. We hope that the Ad Hoc Group of Governmental Experts will be able to conclude its work at an early date and present specific proposals for a verification protocol for the Review Conference next year.

The Mongolian delegation commends the work of the Disarmament Commission on the issue of international arms transfers, with special emphasis on illicit trafficking in arms. We hope that the progress achieved will facilitate conclusion of the work next year.

My delegation appreciates the efforts of the United Nations to strengthen international restrictions on land-mines, as well as its action on mine clearance. As representatives are aware, the General Assembly, at its last two sessions, adopted resolutions calling for a moratorium on the export of land-mines. It is encouraging to note that several countries have already heeded that call.

As for mine-clearance activities, the international meeting held last July in Geneva was a valuable undertaking. It is important that it resulted in enhanced international awareness of the land-mine problem, in all its dimensions, and in increased international cooperation in this field.

We also welcome the decision taken by the recently concluded Review Conference of the States parties to the Convention on certain conventional weapons. I refer to the adoption of an additional protocol prohibiting blinding laser weapons. Although it is regrettable that the Review Conference was unable to reach agreement on anti-personnel land-mines, it is important that the States parties decided to continue their work next year, with a view to resolving outstanding issues.

Referring to the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations Regional Centres for peace, disarmament and development, my delegation expresses its deep regret that, at a time when the importance of regional approaches is increasingly recognized, these Centres will be closed because of the inadequacy of financial resources. We are, in any case, of the view that the Kathmandu Centre in Nepal, which plays an important role in establishing a habit of dialogue in this highly diverse and complex region of the world, should continue its commendable activities.

Mr. Ronneberg (Marshall Islands): Please permit me, Sir, to offer you our congratulations on your election to the high office of Chairman of the First Committee and to assure you of our support and cooperation. Our congratulations are also extended to the other officers of the Committee.

The legacy of nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands has caused us great pain. We are steadily unravelling the large amount of information now available to us on the nature and consequences of nuclear-testing activities there and are deeply disturbed and alarmed at what we are uncovering. We have even discovered that the then United Nations Secretary-General collaborated with the United States authorities in suppressing a petition from the Marshall Islands requesting that the United Nations put a stop to the nuclear tests in 1954.

We want to bring to the attention of the international community the reality and magnitude of the effects of these tests on our health, our environment and our future development as a nation. We also want representatives to become aware of our daily struggle to cope with a situation whose radiation-induced nature continues to haunt us, whose complexity, in terms of solutions, is far beyond our capacity to handle, and whose conception was solely for the purpose of countering hostilities and tensions that bore no relationship whatsoever to the Marshall Islands.

So I ask Member States, when they hear us speaking out about the perils of radiation, to think about these in terms of human suffering and to try to visualize Marshallese children being born faceless, with no bones, or with missing or extra limbs — the jellyfish babies, as some have come to call them — and the irreparable damage wreaked upon the reproductive health of their mothers.

As was stated at a plenary meeting of the General Assembly, we are grateful that our former Trustee has taken some steps to rectify the problems that we face, and recent developments give us some hope for the safe resettlement of Rongelap Atoll. We also note the following instances of international recognition of the problems we face.

The Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons took special note of the international community's responsibility to assist the inhabitants and restore the environment of the former United Nations Trust Territories adversely affected by nuclear-weapon-testing programmes.

The Fourth United Nations Conference on Women, held this year in Beijing, recognized that development and the concept and practice of environmental degradation are incongruent and that the use and testing of nuclear weapons is undeniably one factor that destroys the environment and displaces people, as well as inducing high health risks.

The South Pacific Forum, held last month in Papua New Guinea, called upon all Governments and international organizations with expertise in the field of cleaning up and disposing radioactive contaminants to give appropriate remedial assistance when so requested by affected countries. The Forum also noted the existence of a special responsibility towards those peoples of the former United Nations Trust Territory administered by the United States who had been adversely affected by nuclear-weapon tests conducted during the period of trusteeship. This responsibility includes the safe resettlement of displaced human populations and the restoration to economic productivity of affected areas, the provision of adequate health care, and compensation for loss of life, land and health.

As if our own four decades of painful experience of the dreadful business of nuclear testing were not enough, the beautiful Pacific was this year subjected to the trauma of yet another series of nuclear testing, intended to continue until May next year. I refer to the resumption by the French of nuclear testing at Mururoa Atoll, French Polynesia. It is probably because we are far removed from the metropolitan centres that certain people tend to look at

the Pacific as the "ideal desert" for nuclear testing — as one French official recently put it. Often overlooked is the fact that all island nations spread out across the length and breadth of the Pacific are connected by this mighty ocean. Nuclear damage to one poses immense long-term implications and dangers for others in the region.

As people who are living the nightmarish experience of nuclear testing, we cannot and will not accept the weak argument that the current tests are safe for any of our Pacific neighbours and friends. Nor can we accept the continuation of this irresponsible practice in the region. We have denounced its resumption from the beginning, and we shall continue to do so.

Each time one of these underground blasts occurs, a massive bubble about the size of the entire United Nations Plaza is created in the basalt rock. Mururoa is a relatively large atoll, but there have been over 100 of these tests. The result is the creation of a large honeycomb structure underground, and we all know that this is not a very stable arrangement. One more jolt might be all that is needed to collapse the entire atoll, unleashing a torrent of pent-up radiation on the Pacific islands and our neighbours on the Pacific Rim.

We do not want this to happen. We cannot effectively prevent any damage to our home and livelihoods. No scientific studies have been done on the cumulative effects of the explosions — at least, none that we are privy to. We urge that the strictest environmental-impact assessment be carried out by the French authorities immediately, before continued testing. We are not reassured by their statements in this building.

This is why His Excellency President Amata Kabua of the Marshall Islands wrote a personal letter to President Chirac. He tried, in his own way, in his own words, to convey the utter horror that we have been exposed to. He tried to explain why we do not want to see any more tests. The letter went unanswered for several days. And then the first test occurred on Mururoa.

As we stated in the General Assembly, we joined in the support for New Zealand's case against France in the International Court of Justice. We took this action with great regret as France has always been a constructive partner in our relationship with the developed world. It is simply incomprehensible to us that this great nation of culture, science and fine arts can visit such an abomination upon us in the Pacific. We protested to the French authorities, but the first tests went ahead any way.

The International Court of Justice declined to hear our case, but the decision was based entirely on technicalities. France should not think that this is a victory, as many of the Judges pointed out the strong moral and legal background for halting the tests. My delegation strongly disagrees with what the French Foreign Minister said in his statement to the General Assembly a few weeks ago, claiming that the tests were environmentally safe.

Just look at the situation I have described in the Marshall Islands.

We have also received documentation from a number of eminent scientists which would at the very least call for caution. Most recently, at a hearing held by the European Parliament, France was warned by the distinguished scientist and vulcanologist Pierre Vincent that the Mururoa site was unstable. He stated that further tests could destabilize the atoll and cause landslides. In his view, the risk of landslides would remain even if the French Government cancelled its planned nuclear tests. It is this type of scientific report which is causing so much worry for my Government.

Furthermore, France is a State Party to the Convention for the Protection of the Natural Resources and Environment of the South Pacific Region and the Convention on Biological Diversity. The principle of environmental impact assessments and the precautionary approach are not compatible with the activities they are carrying out. The offer to carry out an impact assessment after the tests are finished is a ridiculous proposal, since by then it might be far too late. The tests are violating treaties and violating our environment, and I also think they are a violation of our human rights. The tests must stop, and they must stop now.

In their collective voice the leaders of the countries of the South Pacific Forum issued a statement during their meeting in Papua New Guinea, expressing their extreme outrage at the resumption of French nuclear testing in the Pacific. They demanded that France desist from any further tests. The outrage was especially compounded by the intransigence of France and the People's Republic of China in persisting with their nuclear tests in the face of the strong views of the Pacific region. My Government stands by the decision announced two weeks ago by the Chairman of the Forum, Sir Julius Chan, that France is no longer invited to the post-Forum dialogue.

We fully support the extension of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), and we will also work

actively to achieve a breakthrough for a comprehensive test-ban treaty. In this regard, I wish to offer my full support to the Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. That body can serve as an important avenue for discussion and better relations between States in the region and can promote greater understanding and peaceful coexistence between our nations.

It is my delegation's view that we can achieve much in this new international climate of cooperation and common understandings. The cold war is over, as far as we know. What possible threats are there to the nuclear Powers today that require them to further refine and test these terrible weapons? We must be frank and open in our discussions of this subject. The true purpose of these tests is to allow for further refinement and development of more sophisticated weapons.

These views will form the basis of my delegation's negotiating position on the issues before this Committee. We will seek to support a resolution on the completion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Furthermore, we will support additional work under the NPT regime. The work of the regional centres is also worthy of our continued support, and we will seek to join other, like-minded countries in wholeheartedly condemning the current series of nuclear tests by France and China.

Mr. Fostervoll (Norway): At the outset, let me congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau on your election as officers of this important Committee.

Anniversaries are often used as a reason for taking stock of past and present failures and triumphs. I will not dwell here on the past, as the United Nations celebrates its fiftieth anniversary, but simply express optimism with regard to the future.

Indeed, we have moved ahead quite substantially from the confrontations on international security and disarmament matters that so strongly marked the first 50 years of this Organization. Today we are faced with a more complex picture in which a number of issues are interlinked, making clear analysis more challenging as the concept of security is steadily broadened. Thus, developments in the Middle East, Bosnia and the former Soviet Union, as well as the environmental threats associated with the dismantling and destruction of nuclear and chemical weapons, all have a strong impact on the issues that are traditionally included in the realm of disarmament.

Although many hurdles remain and new problems will undoubtedly arise, there are clear signs of progress on many of the issues in the field of arms control and international security.

The reduction of nuclear weapons in the countries formerly opposing each other in the East-West conflict continues according to schedule.

Efforts to curb the spread of weapons of mass destruction are finally paying off. The decision to extend the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) indefinitely is an achievement of historic significance.

The Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe, which has led to the largest reduction in conventional arms ever, has also instituted an information and verification regime that is unprecedented in its openness, thus establishing a strong, new sense of security on the regional level with a global impact.

We are encouraged by the progress made in the negotiations towards a comprehensive test-ban treaty, particularly on scope, funding and the international monitoring system. We welcome the commitments of France, the United Kingdom and the United States to a true zero-yield ban. It would truly be an important contribution to the negotiations if all nuclear-weapon States could confirm that they have identical positions. With continued good will and hard work, a universal and effectively verifiable test-ban treaty can be concluded during the first half of 1996 and be ready for signature by the opening of the fifty-first session of the General Assembly.

This year the Nobel Committee decided to award the Nobel Peace Prize to Mr. Joseph Rotblat and the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs. This decision reflects the widespread public sentiment against nuclear weapons. Those States that have not yet stopped their nuclear-test programmes should take particular note of this year's award. We see the Peace Prize as giving fresh inspiration to all efforts to promote disarmament and *détente* and to make nuclear weapons superfluous.

It has been a long-standing position of the Norwegian Government that continued or resumed nuclear testing by any country may complicate the negotiations and make universal ratification and implementation of, as well as adherence to, a comprehensive test-ban treaty more

difficult. We therefore strongly deplore both the French and Chinese nuclear tests, particularly in the light of the commitment undertaken by the nuclear-weapon States at the NPT Conference earlier this year to exercise the utmost restraint as regards future nuclear testing. These tests represent a set-back for international non-proliferation efforts and may constitute a risk to human health and the environment in the areas affected. Norway therefore again urges the Chinese and French authorities to abandon their current nuclear-testing programmes and refrain from any further nuclear testing.

The next priority item on the disarmament agenda should be an agreement banning production of fissile material for weapons purposes. Norway is particularly concerned about the safe and controlled handling of fissile material that has been used for weapons purposes. As a consequence of the nuclear disarmament process, spent fissile material is now being released into a non-secure environment. It is important to devise ways to account for existing stocks of fissile weapons materials within or parallel to the future international cut-off regime. In this connection, we again call for the establishment of a regime that will include declarations of stockpiles of all weapons-grade materials, accompanied by other appropriate transparency measures. Furthermore, we call on the nuclear-weapon States to contribute to enhanced confidence and stability, globally as well as regionally, by providing enhanced transparency with regard to their nuclear-weapon arsenals.

My country has been actively engaged in the key area of verification of a nuclear-test-ban treaty. We note with satisfaction that a global seismic monitoring system was successfully put into full-scale operation for testing purposes on 1 January this year.

It is now important to begin realistic testing of the other technologies envisaged for the monitoring system so that an operational system can be ready at the earliest possible time. The overall goal would be to develop and demonstrate the synergies of the different verification technologies in the eventual comprehensive test-ban treaty monitoring system.

Particular attention should be given to the political and economic reasons for the funding of the international verification system. International funding should be based on an equitable distribution of costs in order to avoid placing unreasonable economic burdens on countries whose participation is essential to the provision of global coverage. International funding will also be the best guarantee that the monitoring system will remain an effective deterrent against clandestine nuclear testing. Such financing will ensure that monitoring stations in all participating countries can be maintained to the highest standards required, without being dependent on available resources in each individual country.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is a most important instrument for ensuring regional as well as global stability. It outlaws a category of weapons of mass destruction that are relatively easy to acquire, but which can have devastating effects on civilian populations. As the former Chairman of the Preparatory Commission for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Norway urges all Parties to the Convention that have not already done so, to ratify it without delay. Early ratification by the United States and the Russian Federation, the two declared possessors of chemical weapons, is of particular importance. The international community now awaits the entry into force of this landmark disarmament agreement.

Over the past three years, a substantial effort has been made to clarify the possibilities of adding a verification protocol to the biological and toxin weapons Convention. Such verification measures would undoubtedly be an important addition to the Convention. These efforts need to be pursued with a view to reaching a conclusion at the next Review Conference, in 1996.

Greater transparency in military matters and the systematic nurturing of confidence among States are key elements in bringing about a more stable, prosperous and better governed world community. Accumulation of conventional armaments can only trigger mutual suspicion and countermeasures. Rivalry involving the possible acquisition of weapons of mass destruction has a particular potency for edging regional stability out of control. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms performs an important function in increasing international confidence in so far as States Members of the United Nations lend their full support. Our future efforts should be directed along two tracks: first, the enlargement of the number of participants and, secondly, the extension of the scope of data submitted with the aim of submitting all relevant data.

Land-mines are among the most insidious weapons commonly used in war. They continue to spread terror for years or even decades after hostilities have ended. Norway will therefore continue to work for a total ban on the production, stockpiling, trade and use of anti-personnel land-mines.

My Government regrets that we did not achieve agreement on revising the land-mine protocol during the Review Conference of the 1981 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. On our part, we are ready to resume work in Geneva in January and April of 1996 with a view to achieving substantial improvements in this Protocol.

The long-overdue issue of expansion of the Conference on Disarmament is still with us despite the very clear mandate given to the Conference on Disarmament by the General Assembly last year. The laudable efforts by the President of the Conference on Disarmament to achieve progress represent a step in the right direction. It is our strong hope that the members of the Conference on Disarmament will make the proposed review of the final decision to include the 23 countries on the O'Sullivan list at the earliest possible time. Such an expansion should not exclude the admission of any other country willing to undertake the obligations of membership in the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. Goonetilleke (Sri Lanka): We are gathered here at an important juncture in the history of the United Nations. This year the United Nations completes half a century of service to mankind. During this period, the Organization has been able to withstand the vicissitudes of time and to live up to the expectations of the founding fathers of the Charter. The period also saw the Organization grow from 51 States to 185, thus encompassing all of humanity. These facts speak eloquently to the Organization's strength and viability, its capacity to grow and, most important, its universality. As we stand at the threshold of the third millennium, we should resolve to make the United Nations even more viable and robust. While the Organization can build on its achievements, it is necessary for it to perceive realistically and meet effectively the challenges to international peace and security in the coming century.

One positive accomplishment realized by the international community in this memorable year was the successful conclusion of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Those who went through the exercise and others who observed the long and arduous negotiations will no doubt agree that the indefinite extension of the Treaty was not an easy task. Sri Lanka proposes to introduce a draft resolution on the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the NPT and hopes that the resolution would be adopted by consensus.

Although the extension issue is now behind us, the rest is not. In this regard, the nuclear-weapon States have a special responsibility for honouring their part of the bargain. In keeping with the commitment given by them, these States should fulfil their treaty obligations for nuclear disarmament in good faith and commit themselves to chart a course for the total elimination of nuclear weapons within the shortest possible time-frame. The argument proffered by some nuclear-weapon States that nuclear weapons cannot be "disinvented" is empty rhetoric. If these countries have the political will and the courage, eliminating nuclear weapons will not be an impossible task. After all, we have prohibited chemical weapons and the same can be done to nuclear weapons as well.

My delegation is pleased with the progress made by the Conference on Disarmament to achieve a comprehensive test-ban treaty. However, we share the view of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban, who expressed his sense of disappointment at the lack of a consensus on the basic issues, particularly, on the scope. It is evident that the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban should hasten its pace if it is to meet the goal of signing the treaty in 1996.

In this regard, Sri Lanka is fully supportive of the call made by President Clinton of the United States that the Conference on Disarmament should complete negotiations by the end of the first part of the 1996 session of the Conference on Disarmament, so that the treaty can be ready for signature by the fall of 1996. In the eventuality that the negotiations should not be completed by the end of the first part of the 1996 session of the Conference on Disarmament, the Conference should work between the first and the second parts of its 1996 session to complete its task.

Sri Lanka remains strongly supportive of the view expressed in the Conference on Disarmament by many delegations that there is no room for peaceful nuclear explosions under a comprehensive test-ban treaty. My delegation therefore appreciated the lead given by the United States and followed by France and the United Kingdom for a true zero-yield comprehensive test-ban treaty. We urge China and the Russian Federation to follow suit.

Sri Lanka appreciates the moratoriums declared by three of the five nuclear-weapon States on nuclear-weapon testing. The recent nuclear-weapon tests carried out by the remaining two nuclear-weapon States have been received with widespread condemnation by the international

community. These tests, carried out in the aftermath of the indefinite extension of the NPT, certainly do not help enhance the climate of confidence desirable for the comprehensive test-ban treaty negotiations. Rather than conducting tests for assuring the safety and reliability of existing nuclear weapons or for introducing a new generation of nuclear weapons, the nuclear-weapon States would do well to concentrate on finding alternative ways of assuring the safety and security of their countries in an environment devoid of nuclear weapons. Sri Lanka's position on the continued testing of nuclear weapons was clearly reflected in the statements made by my delegation to the Conference on Disarmament on 29 June and 21 September.

While the Conference on Disarmament has made progress in its negotiations for a comprehensive test-ban treaty, regrettably it has not made headway in other items on its agenda in 1995. Following protracted negotiations, the Conference agreed in March on a mandate for establishing an Ad Hoc Committee on banning the production of fissionable materials for weapon purposes. However, the Ad Hoc Committee could not commence its work owing to issues extraneous to the work of the Committee. Similarly, disagreements within the Conference prevented it from re-establishing ad hoc committees on negative security assurances and outer space. Sri Lanka regrets this impasse in the Conference on Disarmament, which prevented this single multilateral disarmament negotiating body from discharging its responsibilities effectively.

Among the issues that drew sharp divisions within the Conference on Disarmament was the proposal to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on transparency in armaments. Last year, in its resolution 49/75 C the General Assembly invited the Conference to consider continuing its work undertaken in the field of transparency in armaments. This was done in consideration of the fact that the mandate given to the Ad Hoc Committee by General Assembly resolution 46/36 L had elapsed by the end of December 1994. The view expressed by many delegations to the Conference on Disarmament was that, if transparency were to be encouraged, it should not be done selectively. In our view, transparency should cover, not only a selected group of conventional weapons, but also all types of conventional weapons and weapons of mass destruction.

However, if there is a consensus within the Conference on Disarmament for considering conventional weapons in all their aspects, my delegation is willing to support such a position, provided that a suitable mandate for an ad hoc committee is decided upon after careful consideration.

Most important, my delegation is of the view that there is a case, particularly following the successful Review and Extension Conference of the NPT, for establishing an ad hoc committee or a negotiating mechanism in the Conference on Disarmament to deal with nuclear disarmament. This is a subject of vital importance to all members of the international community. It is therefore not prudent to allow this matter, which affects the interests of all mankind, to be negotiated bilaterally between the two major nuclear-weapon States or by the five nuclear-weapon States among themselves. The Conference on Disarmament has a proven track record of dealing with such crucial subjects as chemical weapons and a nuclear-test ban. Therefore, my delegation is at variance with the view expressed by some nuclear-weapon States that the question of nuclear disarmament should be negotiated outside the Conference on Disarmament.

My delegation shares the frustration of those countries which, for many years, have been seeking to serve on the Conference on Disarmament. More than two years have gone by since Ambassador Paul O'Sullivan of Australia presented his proposal to the Conference on Disarmament, the implementation of which would have ensured the admission of 23 new members to the Conference. Despite the request made by the General Assembly in its resolution 49/77 B that the Conference on Disarmament make every effort to reach a solution resulting, by the beginning of 1995, in a significant expansion of its composition, the progress achieved by the Conference on this score left much to be desired.

Sri Lanka was not an enthusiastic supporter of the two-stage process adopted by the Conference on Disarmament on 21 September, as my delegation was among the overwhelming majority that supported the O'Sullivan package. Our position is in favour of admitting the 23 countries to the Conference simultaneously and with equal rights and obligations with immediate effect. Extraneous considerations, whether political or security, should not be allowed to delay the resolution of this matter any further. We therefore urge the Conference to complete the two-stage approach began on 21 September by admitting all 23 candidates to the Conference at least by the beginning of the first part of its 1996 session, if not earlier.

While the General Assembly and the Conference on Disarmament are attempting to grapple with the question of transparency in armaments, insidious developments relating

to the procurement and transfer of arms by terrorists, insurgents, mercenaries and drug traffickers are occurring at an alarming rate. Huge quantities of small arms, as well as state-of-the art weapons released in the aftermath of the cold war, are being illegally channelled to vulnerable regions, thus affecting the safety and security of the countries of those regions. More often than not, it is small States such as my own that have to suffer the consequences of this illegal arms trade.

Last year, the General Assembly adopted resolution 49/75 M on measures to curb the illicit transfer and use of conventional arms. This resolution recognized the availability of massive quantities of conventional weapons and especially their illicit transfer, often associated with destabilizing activities. Ironically, States falling victim to such illegal activities often have to defend themselves practically with their arms tied behind them, for these Governments are called upon by the international community, including the arms-exporting countries themselves, scrupulously to observe international humanitarian laws when combating the destabilizing forces. Those Governments that are thus accused of failure to live up to international humanitarian standards are subjected to unilateral arms embargoes imposed on them by the arms-exporting countries, whereas the perpetrators of violence who procure their weapons, perhaps from the very same sources, are never held accountable for their illegal and destabilizing activities. Instead, they are eulogized as heroes, their actions carried out with gross impunity and condoned as struggles for national liberation or self-determination.

The international community therefore has a special responsibility to check and curb these illicit arms transfers as a matter of the highest priority, as terrorism has emerged as the principal public enemy, often transcending national boundaries and threatening to tear apart the very fabric of civil society. Hence, the imperative need for this Committee to study this issue in depth and take remedial measures before more and more vulnerable States fall victim to the illegal arms trade.

For nearly two decades, in cooperation with the littoral and hinterland States of the Indian Ocean region, Sri Lanka has striven to establish a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean. The international political and security climate that existed during this period prevented us from achieving that objective. However, positive developments in international political relations have offered us new opportunities for enhancing peace and security in the region.

Great-Power rivalry is a thing of the past. It is a widely accepted fact that great-Power rivalry has been replaced by a climate of confidence, trust and cooperation resulting in a renewed interest in matters relating to the Indian Ocean. For example, in addition to the work of the Ad Hoc Committee in New York and the Indian Ocean Maritime Affairs Cooperation (IOMAC) in Colombo, there have been new initiatives resulting in meetings at Grand Bay in Mauritius and Perth in Australia, with a view to exploring the possibilities of co-operation, particularly in the economic field, among the Indian Ocean Rim countries.

Sri Lanka, while supporting these new initiatives, holds the view that the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean remains the primary vehicle for taking practical measures to ensure conditions of peace, security and stability in the Indian Ocean region. My delegation has noticed the renewed interest in the Indian Ocean expressed by the three permanent members of the Security Council with whom the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee had consultations during the course of the year, particularly on the new alternative approaches adopted by the Ad Hoc Committee. My delegation strongly supports the view expressed in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee that the permanent members of the Security Council and the major maritime users of the Indian Ocean should take an active part in the work of the Ad Hoc Committee at a time when the Committee is examining its future role and elaborating alternative approaches.

In conclusion, permit me briefly to refer to the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Development in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. Sri Lanka regrets to note the declining financial support for these Centres, which may result in their closure.

While recognizing the predicament faced by the United Nations as a result of dwindling financial resources to maintain the Centres at a time when the Organization itself is experiencing a difficult financial situation, Sri Lanka is of the view that closing these Centres would result in the loss of the regional dimension of disarmament, with all its consequences.

Recognizing the importance of a regional approach to confidence-building measures and disarmament, Sri Lanka wishes to plead with the more affluent countries in the Asia-Pacific region not to permit the Kathmandu Centre to be closed down for want of financial resources. We are fully aware of the extent of the services rendered by the Kathmandu Centre. Countries in the region should therefore contribute generously to realize its potential.

Mr. Mra (Myanmar): Mr. Chairman, your unanimous election to the chairmanship of the First Committee of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session is indeed a fitting tribute to your outstanding diplomatic skills and high professionalism, as well as to the reputation of Mongolia as a country with a great historical tradition. On behalf of my delegation, as well as my own behalf, I wish to extend to you our warmest congratulations on your assumption of the chairmanship of this important Committee. Our felicitations also go to other members of the Bureau.

The Review and Extension Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held in New York from 17 April to 12 May 1995, was one of the most important international conferences dealing with disarmament in several decades. The Conference took a momentous decision to extend the NPT indefinitely. This was one of three decisions adopted by the Conference, namely, the decision on the extension of the Treaty, the decision on Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament and the decision on strengthening the review process for the Treaty.

Accordingly, my delegation takes the view that the decision to extend the Treaty indefinitely must be considered as part of the package deal reached at the Conference, and that it conferred on the nuclear-weapon States an added obligation to carry out effective nuclear disarmament measures, leading to the total elimination of these weapons.

It is regrettable that the nuclear-weapon States apparently retain their cold-war mindset with regard to nuclear weapons. The cold war is over. There is no justification whatsoever for retaining the nuclear deterrence doctrines, predicated on the first use of nuclear weapons. Today's realities and prudence dictate that these nuclear deterrence doctrines be abandoned, and be replaced by new concepts. One such new concept relates to the strictly defensive nuclear posture and no-first-use policy, pending the achievement of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Another such concept relates to the twin approach of the effective implementation of nuclear disarmament leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons, on the one hand, and non-proliferation of these weapons, on the other. For nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation of nuclear weapons are like two sides of the same coin, and are inseparable.

Two steps are essential: first, the taking of effective measures for nuclear disarmament, with the ultimate objective of the total elimination of these weapons, and secondly, the process of de-emphasizing the role of nuclear weapons.

It is the conviction of my delegation that the only satisfactory and truly effective way to remove the nuclear threat is the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Our vision is a nuclear-weapon-free world. No more. No less.

We welcome the bilateral efforts by the Russian Federation and the United States of America for the commencement of the process of nuclear disarmament and the conclusion of START I and START II agreements. We look forward to the full implementation of these important Treaties. We also take note with appreciation of the unilateral measures taken by some nuclear-weapon States in the field of nuclear arms control.

However, it is essential that all nuclear-weapon States be involved in the process of nuclear disarmament. It also requires further deep reductions in the nuclear arsenals of the nuclear-weapon States.

For these reasons, it is imperative that nuclear disarmament be given high priority in both bilateral and multilateral disarmament negotiations and that the Conference on Disarmament — the sole multilateral negotiating forum dealing with disarmament — establish at the beginning of its 1996 session an appropriate negotiating mechanism for nuclear disarmament.

In the aftermath of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, the following issues will be the litmus tests for the political will of the nuclear-weapon States: nuclear disarmament, which I have just described; the comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT); a ban on fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; and security assurances — negative and positive — for non-nuclear-weapon States.

At present, the CTBT is the top priority on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, and it is imperative that the CTBT negotiations be concluded in good time in 1996. At the 1995 NPT Conference, States parties to the Treaty, including the nuclear-weapon States, also set the target for the completion of the CTBT negotiations not later than 1996. In order to meet this target, it is essential that the Conference on Disarmament re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear Test Ban right at the beginning of its 1996 session and that the CTBT negotiations be concluded by the end of the second part of the session at the latest. We hope that the Conference on Disarmament

will be able to intensify the negotiations to conclude them successfully in good time.

In this context, we welcome the recent announcement by some nuclear-weapon States of their acceptance of the true zero-yield option. We hope that this development will pave the way for reaching consensus expeditiously on the scope of the future treaty.

Another question that needs to be addressed with urgency is that of banning fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. Earlier this year, the Conference on Disarmament established the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prohibition of the Production of Fissile Material for Nuclear Weapons or Other Nuclear Explosive Devices, on the basis of the report of the Special Coordinator, Ambassador Shannon of Canada, yet the Conference on Disarmament found itself unable to initiate the work of the Ad Hoc Committee during its 1995 session. It is incumbent on all States members of the Conference to overcome the outstanding procedural and substantive issues and to initiate the work of the Ad Hoc Committee at the beginning of its 1996 session.

Another question which deserves to be accorded high priority in the aftermath of the 1995 NPT Conference is that of security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States. We take note with appreciation of resolution 984 (1995) of the Security Council and of unilateral declarations on security assurances made by the nuclear-weapon States prior to it, but they do not measure up to the requirement of non-nuclear-weapon States.

The 1995 NPT Conference, in its decision on Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, underscored the need to take further steps to assure non-nuclear-weapon States Parties to the Treaty against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, which could take the form of an international legally binding instrument. This constitutes a positive step. The next important step will be to conclude, at an early date, an international legally binding instrument covering both negative and positive security assurances. Accordingly, we should like to see the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on Negative Security Assurances in the Conference on Disarmament at the beginning of its 1996 session and to witness the further advancement of the substantive work of the Committee.

The recent decision of the Conference on Disarmament to agree to its expanded composition, recommended by the then-Special Coordinator for Membership, Ambassador Paul O'Sullivan of Australia, is a useful interim step. Ambassador Nacer Benjelloun-Touimi of Morocco was instrumental in paving the way, through his long and difficult consultations, for this decision. We commend him for his tireless efforts and for his contribution to this positive step. We earnestly hope that the membership of the 23 States will become effective at an early date.

Let me now touch briefly upon the activities of the United Nations Disarmament Centre in our region. My delegation wishes to express its deep appreciation of the useful role played by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. The Centre has an excellent track record. It has contributed a lot to the promotion of public awareness, dissemination of information and the exchange of views on disarmament issues in the regional context.

At a time when there is an increasing recognition of the need for regional approaches, it would be inappropriate to close down the Regional Centre. We are in favour of cost-saving and budget cuts wherever these measures are required and justified, but the merit of each individual case should be taken into account. The case for preserving the Centre is all the more compelling since it operates solely on the funds of voluntary contributions and has its own adequate funds. We therefore recommend that the Centre be preserved and be allowed to continue to play its useful role by organizing regular annual meetings, thematic seminars and other promotional activities within the financial resources of the voluntary contributions.

In the post-cold-war and post-1995 NPT Conference era, conditions are indeed favourable for reaching concrete agreements on nuclear-arms limitation and disarmament issues. We must take advantage of these favourable conditions and make substantive progress on these crucial issues.

Mr. Oyaya (Kenya): At the outset, I should like to join other speakers in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I should like to assure you and members of your Bureau of Kenya's full cooperation and support as you steer the deliberations of this Committee.

As we mark the fiftieth anniversary of this body, whose Charter expresses the intention to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war", it is an opportune time to reflect and re-evaluate collectively recent developments in the field of disarmament and international

security. The year 1995 is memorable in that it also marks the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, the fiftieth anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

Earlier this year, a convergence of the community of nations here in New York approved the indefinite extension of the Treaty. The decision by the States Parties to the NPT was proof of their determination to work towards a nuclear-free world. The nuclear-weapon-States should honour the commitments and security assurances made to non-nuclear-weapon States by translating these commitments into legally binding international instruments. We therefore recommend that the Conference on Disarmament continue to work on this question, with a view to concluding its work as soon as possible.

We look forward to the conclusion by 1996 of a non-discriminatory and effectively verifiable comprehensive test-ban treaty. We believe that an end to all nuclear testing by all States, in all environments, for all time, is an essential step in preventing the striving for a qualitative expansion of nuclear arsenals and further nuclear proliferation. Consequently, we are concerned at the decision by some nuclear-weapon States to resume nuclear testing. This is contrary to the understanding that had prevailed at the Conference on Disarmament that all nuclear-weapon States would exercise the utmost restraint with respect to nuclear testing pending the conclusion of the comprehensive test-ban treaty. We therefore join the international community in reiterating the call for a strict observance of the moratorium on nuclear testing pending the conclusion of the comprehensive test-ban treaty.

Kenya looks forward to the commencement of negotiations on a non-discriminatory and universally applicable convention banning the production and stockpiling of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices, and supports the convening of a special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, especially as it will accelerate the negotiations on pending conventions in the field of disarmament.

It is indeed disappointing that despite the noble intentions embodied in the United Nations Charter and the end of the cold war, conflict situations still abound in the world. These conflicts undermine international peace and security, which we strive so hard to achieve, as they tend to have an intrinsic domino effect since they spill over and not only destabilize the neighbouring countries but also have an adverse effect on social and economic development. We are of the view that the resources that are being channelled for military purposes should be better utilized for social and economic development programmes.

In view of this, Kenya supports all proposals for the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in the field of verification of multilateral disarmament agreements. Consequently, we believe that the implementation of the goals and principles outlined in the Secretary-General's Agenda for Peace and its subsequent Supplement should be given priority, as they emphasize preventive diplomacy and peacemaking. My delegation is of the view that confidence and trust among nations create an environment that would give them the confidence to disarm and develop in peace.

My delegation supports the expansion of the range of weapons included in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, since an increased level of openness and transparency in the field of armaments would enhance confidence, promote stability, help States to exercise restraint, ease tensions and strengthen international security. The Register would streamline the trade in, and control of, the movement of conventional weapons, especially transfers in volatile areas. Moreover, it would contribute to the reduction of dangerous misconceptions about the intentions of States and would also bring about restraint in the production and transfer of arms.

Kenya supports all measures designed to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and also the setting up of a representative intergovernmental group of experts to study the issue of non-proliferation of such weapons. To this effect, we note the restrictions on the use and transfer of blinding laser weapons, agreed upon a few days ago in Vienna at the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use Of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Exclusively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, as a foundation for a future comprehensive ban. We note with concern the failure of the Conference to agree on strengthening Protocol II of the Convention, on prohibitions on the use of anti-personnel land-mines. The destructive and destabilizing effect of land-mines all over the globe lingers long after the end of conflict. Unexploded land-mines and booby-traps, which litter the landscape and war zones, cause untold physical havoc to thousands of civilians. They also make it difficult for farmers to cultivate the land, thereby affecting food production. Greater attention needs to be paid to banning the production and trade in these destructive weapons.

The regional organizations and arrangements have an important role in the maintenance of international peace and security. Kenya, however, wishes to reiterate that the thrust of the contributions of the regional organizations and arrangements should be targeted towards preventive diplomacy and peacemaking. Peace-keeping and peace enforcement should remain the primary responsibility of the United Nations. These responsibilities are enshrined in the Charter and cannot be transferred to regional organizations. We are therefore supportive of the various initiatives that have been set up for the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, which have been endorsed by the decision on Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, as we believe that they will contribute greatly towards attaining the objective of the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. Kenya therefore supports the Declaration on the Denuclearization of Africa. We welcome the results so far of the text of a treaty on a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Africa.

Mr. Poernomo (Indonesia): On behalf of my delegation and on my own behalf, I should like to extend to you warmest congratulations on your assumption of the chairmanship of this important Committee. We are fully confident that under your able stewardship the First Committee will achieve substantive progress. I should also like to extend our felicitations to the other members of the Bureau.

This year's session of the First Committee is being held against the backdrop of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. It affords us a unique opportunity for both deep reflection on our approaches to questions relating to armaments and the charting of our future endeavours to achieve disarmament.

It should be recalled that the General Assembly, spurred on by the awesome threat posed by atomic weapons and by the disquieting prospect of a nuclear arms race, focused attention from the very beginning on questions of disarmament, and in considering the regulation, reduction and elimination of armaments, it adopted a number of principles, many of which have retained their validity and relevance. By the end of the 1950s, the General Assembly had called for general and complete disarmament under effective international control to be the basic goal of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. Concurrently, the Assembly adopted a number of resolutions that, in one way or another, recognized the interrelationship between the problems of disarmament and security, and touched upon the arrangements and institutions that should accompany the process of disarmament to ensure the security of States and the maintenance of international peace.

Throughout this period, worldwide alarm, reflected in numerous United Nations resolutions, grew over the fact that the threat posed by nuclear weapons remained the single most critical global issue. Although such a realization led to some partial or limited agreements during the 1960s and 1970s, *inter alia*, the partial test ban Treaty, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), as well as SALT I and SALT II, the arms race, rather than abating, took on a momentum of its own, spiralling to more and more irrational levels, wholly disproportionate to any rational security requirements of its major protagonists.

Meanwhile, the First Special Session on Disarmament, held in 1978, rendered a substantial contribution to the required turn- around in our thinking in the nuclear and space age. The Final Document, adopted by consensus, contained a thorough analysis of the causes and consequences of the arms race, assigned priority to the nuclear issues, and conferred upon the Organization the central role and primary responsibility in all disarmament questions.

In the post-cold-war era, as a result of significant shifts in perceptions and attitudes, we have witnessed the initiation of the process of nuclear disarmament as reflected in the INF (intermediate-range nuclear forces) Treaty, which was the harbinger of further reductions in nuclear armaments and the successful conclusion of START I and START II. We also welcomed the broadening and deepening of the dimensions of disarmament, as is evident especially in the progress made in the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various regions of the world, in the creation of zones of peace and cooperation as well as in the prospects for the entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We hope that these positive developments, which have created a new strategic environment, will lead to the renunciation of strategic doctrines and the use of nuclear weapons and thereby make a distinct contribution to the security and survival of all nations.

Clearly then, if a lesson is to be learned from the efforts of these past five decades — and my delegation believes there is — it is a reaffirmation of the principles and priorities of an earlier era and the formulation of a comprehensive and more effective strategy for reversing the arms race and accelerating the process of arms reduction and disarmament, through the machinery and procedures of the multilateral disarmament process. In this context, our

priorities now include the search for new and more stabilizing reductions of nuclear armaments with a view to their ultimate and total elimination, the curbing of the vertical and horizontal proliferation of nuclear weapons, the banning of the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, the initiation of negotiations for an international convention on security assurances to non-nuclear States, and the conclusion of the ongoing negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

It is in this context that Indonesia has joined an overwhelming majority of States to conclude the ongoing negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty as a matter of the highest priority and an essential first step towards curbing the qualitative refinement of weapons and leading to their ultimate elimination. My delegation is, however, concerned that negotiations at the Conference on Disarmament are characterized by an over-emphasis on the non-proliferation aspect, which has become the dominant theme. A candid evaluation of these negotiations makes it clear that the nuclear-weapon States seek to formulate the scope of a treaty in such a way as to make it comprehensive only for those States which do not possess these weapons, while still leaving loopholes for continued testing, using sophisticated techniques which will be beyond the purview of a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Such a stance is incompatible, indeed unacceptable, because it runs counter to the overwhelming demand of the international community to curb the vertical and horizontal proliferation of these abhorrent weapons.

If this trend goes unchecked, it cannot but have a profound bearing on efforts to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty. It therefore behoves us to create an urgently needed new impetus and to express ourselves unequivocally so as to conclude the negotiations as soon as possible. In this context, my delegation has welcomed the United States decision to accept a zero-yield Treaty that will ban any nuclear test, no matter how small, soon after the entry into force of such a treaty. We have deplored underground testing by the two nuclear-weapon States, both on environmental and on health grounds, and also because it contravenes the spirit of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and undermines the ongoing efforts to conclude a comprehensive treaty. While urging the nuclear Powers to refrain from conducting further tests, it is imperative that conscious efforts should now be directed towards achieving by 1996 a treaty banning nuclear testing in all environments for all time without any loopholes or exceptions.

Likewise, the need to conclude a treaty to ban the production of fissile materials for weapons purposes, in view of the existing stockpiles, has become imperative, given the frightening possibility of the smuggling of these materials with potentially disastrous consequences. Regrettably, however, despite its obvious urgency, this issue has failed to make progress at the Conference on Disarmament. It is my delegation's hope that this question will be resolved expeditiously on a priority basis.

The NPT Review and Extension Conference deliberated on and addressed all aspects of the Treaty, the ramifications of which for the critical interests of all signatories have been self-evident. It was my delegation's expectation that States Parties would not only reaffirm their commitments but also comply fully with their obligations as stipulated in the Treaty. However, we were dismayed by the policies and positions of the nuclear Powers and by the maintenance of their unilateral and strategic posturing which took precedence over the fulfilment of those obligations.

Furthermore, issues long identified as critical components of the non-proliferation regime were marginalized in the decisions adopted by the Conference. These were conspicuous by the lack of specific commitments concerning: an end to the qualitative aspects of nuclear armaments; the process of nuclear disarmament within a time-bound framework and under multilateral auspices; assurances of the orderly flow of technology for developing countries; and the right of non-nuclear States to credible, unconditional and legally binding security assurances. The indefinite extension of the NPT took away the sense of urgency from the obligations undertaken in article VI of the Treaty and thereby perpetuated and legitimized the possession of nuclear weapons. It was particularly regrettable that the Conference failed to adopt a final declaration, thereby reflecting the fundamental differences between the nuclear-haves and the have-nots.

The fact that the Conference agreed on strengthening the review process for the Treaty as well as on Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament should not breed complacency. Nuclear disarmament remains an imperative. Hence, our priority should continue to be one of seeking further deep reductions in nuclear armaments with the ultimate goal of their elimination within a specific time-frame.

The question of security assurances has long occupied a position of pre-eminent importance on the disarmament agenda, as an overwhelming majority of non-nuclear States

have called for a recognition of their right not be attacked or threatened with nuclear weapons. The unilateral pledges given last April in the Security Council by the nuclear Powers do not, by themselves, create the necessary confidence that nuclear weapons will not be used. Such declarations leave ample room for subjective interpretations. Such assurances, to be credible, must be reinforced by a firm commitment to non-use of nuclear weapons and to the renunciation of strategic doctrines which offer an immediate and more satisfactory solution to the universal quest for security. There is also the danger that in certain circumstances, especially after the initiation of hostilities, such assurances may be unilaterally withdrawn. They have not been multilaterally negotiated and they are unverifiable. Hence, they do not offer legitimate, reasonable and binding assurances against the valid concerns of non-nuclear States.

In the context of an unacceptable balance of obligations and responsibilities as between the nuclear and the non-nuclear States, it is the legitimate right of parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty which have renounced nuclear weapons to get unconditional and legally binding assurances. Without such iron-clad assurances, the non-nuclear States would remain under the threat or actual use of nuclear weapons and they are therefore committed to a common formulation incorporated in a legal document.

Regional and subregional organizations continue to make substantial contributions to the cause of disarmament and security. At the Second Regional Forum of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), held last August, security issues were addressed in a spirit of mutual respect and equality while emphasis was placed on the importance of developing constructive and cooperative relationships. At the same time, positive progress has been made in resolving the legal and technical aspects of a draft treaty for a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia. Its realization would be a significant regional contribution to global disarmament and non-proliferation.

In conclusion, Indonesia attaches importance to the activities and programmes conducted by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, in Kathmandu. In our continuing endeavours to achieve general and complete disarmament and international security, the Centre has adopted a two-pronged approach. First, it seeks to strengthen cooperation between the United Nations and various regional and subregional organizations in their common efforts to strengthen regional peace and global security. Secondly, it gives practical expression to the concept of a regional approach to disarmament, in both the nuclear and the conventional aspects. As the repository of experience and expertise in these areas for five decades, the Organization can, upon the request of the countries concerned, render assistance for regional initiatives. The Centre's primary tasks of assisting the States concerned to address pressing issues, to stimulate new initiatives for negotiations and to explore fresh approaches to disarmament remain largely unfulfilled. My delegation therefore calls for the continuation of its activities.

The Chairman: I have received a request from a member who wishes to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind the Committee that the rules in regard to such replies apply. I call on the representative of France.

Mrs. Bourgois (France) (*interpretation from French*): The question of nuclear tests has been addressed once again today and I am therefore obliged to recall the facts with regard to France.

For a country like mine whose defence is based *inter alia* on the possession of nuclear weapons and whose arsenal is not overly large, based on the principle of strict sufficiency to which we have voluntarily adhered, the question of a final halt to nuclear testing was a critical one. The decision we ourselves took to ban any further nuclear testing at the end of the present campaign was a difficult one. It was a decision that we assume fully, first with regard to the completion of a limited programme in terms of the number and duration of tests and, secondly, by the decision that we were the first to take, namely, that the scope of the treaty prohibiting nuclear tests should be assimilated to a zero option, that is to say, a total ban on nuclear tests.

The arguments used against nuclear tests are unfounded. First, this programme in no way contradicts the international commitments assumed by France in any context whatsoever. Secondly, the concerns expressed, which my country understands, relating to health, the environment and the stability of the Mururoa Atoll, are concerns not based on any proved facts. Let me say, first of all, how much importance we attach to the safety of the environment and of the population much closer to the Atoll than the Marshall Islands, namely the Polynesian populations, our own citizens, whom we would not wish to expose to any danger, at any price.

Everyone recognizes, I am sure, the unprecedented efforts at transparency that we have made to reassure the international community and enable it to verify what we are saying. The International Atomic Energy Agency will

conduct an impartial assessment at the end of the present programme — but allow me to repeat once again that successive missions over the last 15 years to Mururoa Atoll have all revealed that these tests are harmless.

One of the fears expressed today pertains to the stability of the Atoll. From that standpoint as well, all of the studies that have been conducted and all of the precautions taken guarantee the stability of the volcanic underground rock where our tests are taking place.

The Chairman: I now call on the representative of the Marshall Islands in exercise of the right of reply.

Mr. Ronneberg (Marshall Islands): I am deeply sorry to have to take up more of the Committee's time but we need to respond to the right of reply just delivered by the representative of France.

It is indeed ironic that, as we celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the General Assembly dedicated to peace and development, atomic explosions larger than those dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki have again been detonated in the peaceful surroundings of the South Pacific region.

These explosions are not conducted in metropolitan Europe and, in particular, they are not conducted in the backyards of Paris. It simply demonstrates the very fear of the threat of nuclear tests and the mass public outrage at the resumption of the tests.

The First Committee and the plenary Assembly have been listening patiently to an unprecedented barrage of rights of reply from one delegation, a permanent member of the Security Council, to statements by more than a dozen sovereign States. This continuous slinging of words from that delegation aimed at trying to play down the horrors of nuclear tests has not only clearly illustrated the existence of concern, but assures the international community of the very existence of resistance towards peace and real global stability.

The issue is not about the prerequisites for a comprehensive test-ban treaty, nor is it simply about non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, nor is it about French insistence that the tests follow procedures for international safety: the issue at heart is why tests have to be carried out at all. There is simply no justification in today's changing geopolitical situation.

To make my point more clearly I wish to ask this: Just who is the enemy that poses the threat, triggering the doubtful reasons given for resumption by France of nuclear-weapon testing? France has told this Committee that tests are carried out in the South Pacific with due regard for safety. If that is so, if there can be an assurance of safety, why are the tests not being carried out in France? Moreover, what would France's neighbours say if it decided to test in the Bay of Biscay? Are the lives and health of Pacific Islanders worth less than the lives and health of other peoples?

Why, just recently, was there a move from Mururoa Atoll to Fangataufa Atoll for the second test? Was it because of the danger of a landslide — something that has been described in our statements and by scientists? Why does the technology need to be improved so that the destructive capacity is assured and enhanced, when existing technology could destroy this planet 100 times over? It simply does not make any sense.

We express extreme outrage at these tests being carried out in our region. They are in complete contravention of a number of treaties and protocols — for example, the Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Noumea Convention and the biodiversity Convention. France, as a party to these Treaties and Protocols, has legal as well as moral obligations. During the recent Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty it made these pledges again.

Since 1945 more than 2,000 nuclear tests have been carried out. We do not need any more, anywhere, at any time, for any reason. There is just no reason for these insane weapons. The policy of deterrence through the possession of nuclear weapons of mass destruction is simply absurd. The global implications are serious. There are questions of doubt and suspicion that affect us all, whether we are small or big Powers. The world is now more interrelated than ever, and the questions and doubts expressed by the Pacific countries need to be addressed.

France must comply with the many political, legal and moral obligations deriving from its pledges to the international community at large. France must send to all countries a correct and immediate signal about its genuineness in respect of regional and international obligations.

The Chairman: I call on the representative of France for a second statement in exercise of the right of reply.

Mrs. Bourgois (France) (*interpretation from French*): Unfortunately, the statement that has just been made by the representative of the Marshall Islands adds nothing to the debate, so I shall confine myself to referring him to my country's earlier statement.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/50/PV.7

General Assembly

Official Records

Fiftieth session

First Committee

7th Meeting
Thursday, 19 October 1995, 3 p.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Erdenechuluun ..... (Mongolia)

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Antonio de Icaza (Mexico), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

Agenda items 57 to 81 *(continued)*

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. Zlenko (Ukraine) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I should like to convey to the Chairman and the other officers of the Committee my congratulations on their election and to wish them every success in their work.

(spoke in English)

Since the time of the founding of the United Nations, disarmament has been among the priorities in its activities. There is no doubt that this most authoritative international Organization has made a substantial contribution to establishing an atmosphere of confidence and cooperation throughout the world. However, I would like to note that the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations is not only a time to review and consolidate the achievements of the past but also a time to introduce new elements into its activities so as to adapt it to the new realities resulting from the changed political climate. The end of the cold war and of the confrontation between two opposing blocs not only provides extensive opportunities for the United Nations but also dictates the need for transformation and for an attempt to find new forms and methods for its activities.

At the present time, it has a unique opportunity to give up ideological discussions and concentrate its attention fully on solving urgent problems. The agenda clearly raises the question of creating a model of the disarmament process for the next millennium, allowing us to enter the new millennium and develop further cooperation in the world without wars and conflicts. The First Committee can and must play an important role in this process.

The fruitful outcome of the Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), with its decision on the indefinite extension of the Treaty, was undoubtedly the main event of the last inter-sessional period. This decision was of particular importance for my State, whose road to accession to this fundamental Treaty was far from being simple, preceded as it was by essential and intensive work. Although it had never sought to possess nuclear weapons, Ukraine nevertheless found itself in the unique situation of having inherited the world's third-largest nuclear potential.

Ukraine, even before the break-up of the former USSR, was the first to voluntarily declare its desire to become a non-nuclear-weapon State. Without addressing the background of this problem, I would like to note that our position was reasonable and constructive in spite of some elements of misunderstanding and even pressure in regard to the so-called "Ukrainian nuclear question". With its accession to the NPT and its ratification of START I, Ukraine has demonstrated its consistent desire to meet the commitments it had undertaken, as well as the peaceful nature of its policy and its desire to establish a non-nuclear world in the future.

95-86371 (E)

This record contains the original texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

Important progress has also been achieved in the area of security assurances. In this context I would like to emphasize the unquestionable importance of the Memorandum on security assurances in connection with the accession of Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakstan to the NPT, as well as resolution 984 (1995) on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States, unanimously adopted by the United Nations Security Council. These decisions serve as proof of a new and positive trend in the dialogue between nuclear and non-nuclear- weapon States and should be considered as one more step towards the elaboration of a universal international legal document on the subject.

At the same time, I would like to stress that, in the opinion of Ukraine, the current situation — in which there are States in the world that build their security on the fact that they possess nuclear weapons, "threshold" States and countries that have never had or have voluntarily relinquished such weapons — cannot be considered stable. The main objective in the near future is to make the NPT, a key treaty in the field of nuclear disarmament truly universal.

We would also welcome the fulfilment by the nuclear States of the obligations they have assumed in accordance with article VI of the NPT. The early ratification of the START II Treaty by its parties and the participation of the United Kingdom, France and China in negotiations on the reduction of strategic offensive weapons could contribute substantially to a further strengthening of peace and security.

The wish that the fiftieth year of the existence of nuclear weapons would become their last is Utopian, but the international community can and must do everything possible to prevent another 50 years of nuclear explosions. To this end, all States participating in the work of the Conference on Disarmament should do their utmost to complete the negotiations on the comprehensive test-ban treaty (CTBT) in 1996. Ukraine strongly welcomes the important political decisions of France, the United States and the United Kingdom regarding the scope of the CTBT, making it truly comprehensive. We believe that all States, especially other nuclear-weapon States, will agree to the zero-option, banning all tests and that this decision will contribute to considerable progress in the negotiating process.

In connection with the work on the CTBT, I should like once again to appeal to all nuclear States to refrain from nuclear tests, thus demonstrating their real desire to move into a non-nuclear world.

A no less important step in nuclear disarmament should be the conclusion of a universally applicable and non-discriminatory cut-off convention banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. We welcome the decision of the Conference on Disarmament to establish an Ad Hoc Committee mandated to negotiate such a treaty and we believe that the Committee's failure to do any substantive work during the 1995 session will stimulate the Conference on Disarmament to begin its activities on this issue promptly at the beginning of next year.

These two important treaties on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament make it extremely urgent to improve the activity of that single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. Unfortunately, the work of the Conference on a range of urgent issues has made little progress recently and the problem of expanding its membership has not been solved, although the new international situation requires the elaboration of universal treaties to be effectively implemented by all member States. This can be achieved if all States concerned participate in their elaboration.

We are glad that at last, at the Conference on Disarmament, an interim solution on the expansion of its membership has been achieved on the basis of the O'Sullivan list. I should like to express the hope that the earliest possible date of expansion mentioned in the text of this document will become a reality by the beginning of the next session of the Conference.

Ukraine considers the question of the need to take measures against illegal trafficking in nuclear material to be of major importance. This problem has long been given serious attention at the International Atomic Energy Agency. We believe that it should also be addressed by the First Committee. In this connection, Ukraine announced its intention to submit to the General Assembly a draft resolution on strengthening international cooperation in the field of cross-border traffic-control and the prevention of illicit trade in nuclear materials.

Ukraine, being a non-chemical-weapon State, shares the interest of the world community in seeing that the Chemical Weapons Convention enter into force as soon as possible and it is in the constitutional process of preparing for its ratification. We applaud those States that have already deposited their instruments of ratification with the Secretary-General.

We continue to devote great attention to strengthening the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction by establishing an international regime for control of its implementation. We welcome the first steps made in this direction and believe that this work will be completed by the beginning of the Fourth Conference of the States Parties to the Convention.

While the importance attached to issues relating to weapons of mass destruction is fully justified, we must never lose sight of the problem of conventional weapons. Armed conflicts burning in various corners of the globe clearly demonstrate that conventional armaments jeopardize human lives.

Supporting an initiative of the United States at the forty-eighth session of the General Assembly, Ukraine has introduced a four-year moratorium on the export of anti-personnel land-mines and urges all States that have not yet done so to follow it. We also welcomed with satisfaction the initiative of the Secretary-General to convene an international meeting on mine clearance in Geneva in 1995 and we submitted feasible proposals on the expected contribution of Ukraine in combating this type of weapon.

Ukraine took an active part in the work of the Vienna Review Conference of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. We welcome the adoption of Protocol IV on blinding laser weapons and strongly hope that the resumed 1996 session will finalize the work aimed at strengthening Protocol II of the Convention.

Ukraine is also committed to the fulfilment of its obligations under other international agreements and the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. We welcome the functioning of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. We consider transparency in armaments to be an important measure and we submit data to the Register. We support the activities of the Secretary-General, in collaboration with a group of governmental experts, towards the further development of the Register.

The third year of reductions under the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe is coming to an end this November. In spite of considerable economic difficulties, Ukraine will spare no effort to be in a position by that time to reduce its weapons and equipment under the Treaty.

In conclusion, I should like to reaffirm my delegation's belief that the coming year will be marked with substantial progress in solving a number of urgent problems of disarmament, namely, the signing of the CTBT, the entry into force of the CWC, the elaboration of a verification protocol to the BTWC and remarkable changes in other spheres of arms control and disarmament. I express the hope that decisions taken on the basis of the constructive work of our Committee will promote the most effective way of achieving these objectives and demonstrate the capability of the United Nations to be the guarantor of international security.

Mr. Matiko (United Republic of Tanzania): I wish to associate myself with other delegations in extending to you, Mr. Erdenechuluun, and the other members of the Bureau our sincere congratulations on his election to guide this year's deliberations of the First Committee. I am confident that under his able leadership our work will be a success.

Fifty years have elapsed since the world marked the end of the most destructive war in the history of mankind, which resulted in an unprecedented loss of life and property. The atomic bomb, unleashed over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, was a horrific experience which still haunts humankind and serves as a reminder of the vulnerability of international peace and security amid the ongoing modernization and perfection of deadly weapons by a few countries.

On the eve of the twenty-first century, and indeed closer to the commemorative week of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, this Committee must take stock of past mistakes and look forward to the future with a clear and constructive vision. The aim must be liberating man from the scourge of senseless weapons of mass destruction.

At this stage, we need to ask ourselves a number of pertinent questions and come up with answers commensurate with the relatively positive global environment of the post-cold-war era. Does modern civilization, with its vast avenues of diplomacy, really need nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction? Do Governments need to spend millions of dollars to produce such deadly weapons when most of the world suffers widespread poverty? Why must any nation spend so much scarce resources on beefing up its destructive capability when the remoteness of a nuclear war has now

become a fact? The answer to every one of these questions is a resounding "No".

As it is, civilization is extremely fortunate to have survived for half a century without a nuclear holocaust. This has not been a spontaneous survival. We are all too aware of occasions when the world was on the brink of a nuclear war. Modern civilization dictates that we must not gamble on the life of the world's people for another 50 years. Future generations will neither understand nor forgive us if we let the prevailing golden opportunity to pursue world peace and security slip from our hands through wanton conduct.

I am speaking about the end of the super-Power rivalry which has afforded the international system a reasonable respite in which to work towards global peace and stability. The start made on cutting deeply into the huge nuclear arsenals accumulated during the cold war should encourage the concerned parties to go the extra mile to make binding commitments aimed at the elimination of all nuclear arsenals within an agreed time-frame. While my delegation takes due cognizance of the implementation of the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START I) on the reduction of nuclear arsenals between the United States and the Russian Federation, we earnestly hope that these countries will proceed without delay to ratify START II to enable deeper reductions and enter into negotiations for START III.

In our view, the Review and Extension Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) held in the spring of 1995 concentrated more on the extension process than on predicating it to the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons through a well-programmed reduction of nuclear arsenals. Left unattended, the impression that has been given is that some countries are now qualified to possess nuclear weapons in perpetuity. This impression must be redressed in such a way that the indefinite extension is not seen as watering down the urgency of obligations under article VI of the Treaty.

In order for the international community to attain the desired goal of ridding the world of these weapons of mass destruction, nuclear-weapon States must summon their political will in committing themselves to a deadline for the complete elimination of all weapons of mass destruction.

In this connection, my delegation regrets the failure of the 1995 substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission to achieve consensus on two crucial agenda items. The item on nuclear disarmament and that of the review of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade were unfortunately put to rest. It is a pity that progress could not have been achieved, considering that the session came immediately in the wake of the NPT Review and Extension Conference.

This is a clear example of negotiating in bad faith, where nuclear-weapon States are not too willing to part with their nuclear weapons, and in the process derail recourse to nuclear disarmament. Any attempts to build an exclusive club, reminiscent of the imbalances inherent in the Non-Proliferation Treaty, ought to be resisted.

My delegation welcomes the ongoing negotiations in Geneva for a comprehensive test ban treaty (CTBT). These negotiations are a vitally important element in the process of nuclear disarmament. However, we regret that the most positive aspects of the Treaty, pertaining to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and security assurances, are not getting the priority attention they deserve. These are of paramount interest to non-nuclear-weapon States, and Tanzania calls upon all members of the Conference on Disarmament to address all the concerns of non-nuclear-weapon States.

We are encouraged to learn that some nuclear-weapon States are no longer insisting on some sort of threshold for small tests and are resolved to working for a true zero-yield CTBT. But this, we feel, should be accompanied by universal abstinence from nuclear testing in anticipation of the signing of the Treaty next year. Mere support for the zero-yield option without adherence to the moratorium on testing will render the whole process meaningless.

As Africa, Latin America and Asia continue to make sacrifices in the field of non-proliferation, the only reward they can ask for is a speedy end to the arms race. Africa recently concluded the Treaty of Pelindaba, thus paving the way for the inception of the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone. This is a welcome complement to the Treaties of Rarotonga and Tlateloco in the South Pacific and Latin America respectively.

At this point, let me also refer to the pending negotiations on the banning of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. While the agreement to establish an ad hoc committee for that purpose is already in place, the actual negotiations are yet to commence. With the world holding large amounts of weapon-grade fissile material, we fear for its safety and security, considering the few incidents of smuggling and the possibility that it might fall into the

wrong hands. Negotiations to this effect ought to start sooner rather than later. My delegation therefore considers that the inclusion of stockpiles in the negotiations is vital, rather than merely dealing with future production.

Allow me also to commend the good work done by the Preparatory Commission for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. We urge that appropriate measures be taken to bring the Convention into force. The signatories to the Treaty, in particular those with the most chemical weapons, should lead the way by ratifying the Treaty forthwith.

Of particular interest to Tanzania is the cherished notion of the Zone of Peace in the Indian Ocean. It is the brainchild of the 1970 Lusaka Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement, and the question of establishing a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean has been on the agenda of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Indian Ocean for over two decades now. Although the Committee has worked relentlessly to convene a conference in Colombo, these efforts have foundered on the shores of non-cooperation on the part of some Member States, with some major Western Powers and majority maritime users of the Indian Ocean deciding not to participate in the work of the Committee.

The Ad Hoc Committee has met and agreed to continue consultations, and Tanzania pledges its commitment to the important ideals of establishing a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean, in the interest of peace, security and stability in the region. We appeal to the international community to give the work of this Committee all the support necessary and possible.

In conclusion, let me assure this Committee of my delegation's unwavering support of its efforts to guide this session to a successful conclusion.

Mr. López (Philippines): Allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to join the others in this Committee in congratulating Mr. Erdenechuluun on his assumption of the chairmanship of this Committee. With his vast experience and singular wisdom, and the able assistance of the members of his Bureau, allow me also to express confidence that our work will reach a successful conclusion.

Now more than ever before, peace, trust, confidence and security remain the basic premises for growth and progress. In our part of the world, in spite of differences in race, language and culture, even conflicting claims over territory, we have forged levels of political cooperation on which our region's stability has been built. And within this stable atmosphere, our region has experienced unparalleled levels of growth. We have not let differences rule our relations in our region. Rather, we have chosen to build on our common commitment to peace and our shared desire for progress and development.

In other parts of the world, similar differences have led to less desirable results. We are pained by this and join the rest of the international community in the search for solutions to these problems.

In this regard, we welcome the decision of the United States to send troops to support the peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We are hopeful that this will prove to be the decisive element in the long search for peace in a country whose noble people have long endured untold suffering.

We must be ready at all times to receive peace when it comes. The tragedy of the end of the cold war was our inability to fully respond to the uneasy peace that followed. In this context, we welcome the work that the United Nations has done in the area of confidence-building. This work is a contribution of immense importance and value.

On a global level, we have achieved much in narrowing our differences. We have witnessed many dramatic and meaningful changes in our political and economic lives. But some contentious issues remain.

In the area of disarmament, while problems still remain, I believe that one of the greatest advances thus far has been the lifting of the veil of secrecy that obscured the positions and attitudes of States on this issue, a veil that was a prominent and pervasive function of the cold war. Though States will always continue to deal in euphemisms and diplomatese, much trust and sincerity have sprung forth from this new openness.

We must carry on this sense of transparency and trust. Much of the work of our Committee will be geared towards this end. The Philippines joins the other nations of the world in supporting these initiatives and in expressing hope for their success.

Today, we are witnessing novel and innovative ways of building trust and confidence in our international affairs. In our region, the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has embarked on a bold initiative to bring together foreign ministers and senior officials of countries with an interest in the region to talk about security. On an informal level, the countries involved and interested in the

South China Sea have come together on a regular basis to discuss the management of potential conflict.

On another level, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific has provided academics and policy makers with valuable opportunities to interact and discuss political and security issues in our region. There are many more similar endeavours all over the world that are worthy of mention and praise. What is important is that these efforts reflect the true and sincere desire of the greater majority of States to seek means to maintain and preserve peace.

Today we face the tragic and stark reality that the end of bipolar confrontation was not enough for some States to forgo the possibility of using nuclear weapons. Instead of contributing to the atmosphere of trust and confidence necessary for meaningful and fruitful discussions on disarmament, several States have conducted nuclear tests, in blatant disregard of overwhelming world opinion.

One of the first things that our Organization faced after its founding 50 years ago was the detonation of an atomic device as a weapon of war. Six weeks after the founding of the United Nations, the world witnessed the awesome power of the atom unleashed.

Emerging from a war of unequalled destruction and faced with the imminent threat of nuclear weapons, the first thing our young Organization did was to face the issue squarely. Thus, the first resolution adopted by the United Nations was one that dealt with atomic energy and called for, among other things, the elimination from national armaments of atomic weapons and of all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction. That resolution, on the Establishment of a Commission to Deal with the Problems Raised by the Discovery of Atomic Energy, was adopted unanimously in 1946.

Today we have emerged from a war of a different sort — a war no less costly, a war in which politics has obscured the grave threat of weapons of mass destruction. We have emerged from a cold war, but, as in the war before it, we face the threat of nuclear weapons just the same.

Today we have an opportunity that those before us could only have dreamt of — the opportunity to establish a clear, unequivocal and lasting disarmament regime. However, we are faced with threats that may derail our hopes and aspirations.

The continued refusal of two nuclear-power States to halt nuclear testing directly threatens all our efforts and all our sacrifices to finally put a stop to nuclear proliferation. Those States that seek to downplay the seriousness of this situation should ask themselves if they want to start another journey of fear and distrust for the world community. Those States that seek to serve short-term and partisan interests by waffling on this issue should reflect on the long-term consequences of their actions. We must express our sentiments on this issue in the strongest possible terms, so that there can be no doubt about our resolve.

We will have before us shortly an unprecedented draft resolution against nuclear testing and calling for moratoriums on nuclear testing. Unlike what happened in 1946, our action will not, and should not, fall on deaf ears: the nations and the citizens of the world have spoken on this conflict and ideologies will no longer confuse us or obfuscate the issue.

These and other problems plague us in this new era, but we have also succeeded in taking some meaningful steps in addressing these matters. These should serve to inspire us to face the pressing problems before us with unequalled resolve and determination to achieve true, just and meaningful peace.

Mr. Park: On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Korea, I would like to congratulate Mr. Erdenechuluun on his assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee. I am confident that his vast experience and strong leadership will help guide the work of this Committee to a successful outcome. I would like to take this opportunity to assure him of my delegation's full support and cooperation in the deliberation of the important issues facing the Committee.

We witnessed a watershed in the field of disarmament with the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) by consensus last May. The indefinite extension of the NPT will, no doubt, contribute to both non-proliferation and disarmament of nuclear weapons. However, we have yet to rise to the task of implementing the Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, adopted at the Review and Extension Conference of States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

In this regard, my delegation would like to emphasize the foremost importance of the early conclusion of a treaty banning nuclear testing in a comprehensive and verifiable manner. As a staunch supporter of a comprehensive

nuclear-test ban, we call for the prohibition of nuclear explosions of any kind and in all circumstances, and advocate the earliest possible conclusion of the comprehensive test-ban treaty. With regard to the primary seismological stations under the International Monitoring System, we are pleased to note that the Korea Seismological Research Station at Wonju has been chosen as one of 50 primary stations world wide. Through the Research Station, we are ready to contribute at any time to the efficient implementation of the verification network under the comprehensive test-ban treaty.

My delegation also calls for immediate negotiations on a treaty for a cut-off of the production of fissile material for weapons use. In this regard, we welcome the establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee for that purpose at the plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament in March this year. We are of the view that the early conclusion of such a treaty would mark another breakthrough in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

It is deeply regrettable that some countries with nuclear weapons are still engaged in nuclear testing, despite all the progress made this year towards the conclusion of the comprehensive test-ban treaty. At the Review and Extension Conference of States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the States parties agreed that, pending the entry into force of the comprehensive test-ban treaty, the nuclear-weapon States should exercise the utmost restraint. My delegation would like to urge those States with future plans for nuclear testing to desist from further testing.

The Republic of Korea has consistently called for the early resolution of the issue of membership of the Conference on Disarmament. We believe that if the Conference on Disarmament is to remain a truly relevant and universal regime for disarmament as "the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum", it should be expanded and open to all countries with a serious interest in disarmament. We therefore believe that the Conference on Disarmament needs to open its door to those countries that have both the will and the capacity to contribute to multilateral disarmament. We are in favour of the adhesion of the 23 States accepted for membership as a package, as suggested in the O'Sullivan report. We also hope that the package adhesion of those countries will not be delayed any further because of extraneous political considerations. In this regard, we welcome the decision on expansion of membership adopted at the plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament on 21 September 1995, and hope that the countries in question will gain membership in the Conference on Disarmament at the earliest possible date.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is widely recognized as a landmark in disarmament negotiations. Once the Convention enters into force, it promises to set a new trend towards establishing a more ideal and efficient disarmament regime by eventually eliminating weapons of mass destruction and establishing a reliable verification system. However, my delegation notes with concern the slow rate of ratification by the signatories.

In order to meet the demands of the international community to prohibit and eliminate chemical weapons, we should expedite our endeavours to ensure that the Chemical Weapons Convention enters into force at the earliest possible date. Therefore, I would like to urge the two States that are the major possessors of chemical weapons to complete their domestic procedures for implementation of the Convention and to ratify it without delay.

Serious concern and frustration have been voiced over the numerous issues still to be resolved at the Preparatory Commission for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons at The Hague. In order to address these issues and maintain the required political momentum, a spirit of compromise must prevail among all Member States. While it will not be necessary to take care of every last detail prior to the entry into force of the Convention, it is clear that the sooner the major outstanding issues are resolved, the smoother will be the transition of the Convention from the preparatory phase to full-fledged operation.

In order for the international community to make optimal use of the benefits that will result from full adherence to the Chemical Weapons Convention, we should also strive to achieve universality of membership. The fact that some countries, particularly those countries which are suspected of developing or possessing chemical weapons, still remain outside the Chemical Weapons Convention regime is a matter of grave concern to all Member States that seek to fulfil the objectives of the Convention.

My delegation would therefore like to urge those countries that have not yet signed the Convention to do so at the earliest possible date. In particular, the fact that North Korea, a State which is known to possess a large cache of chemical weapons, still remains outside the international efforts to ban chemical weapons, is a cause of serious concern with regard to the effectiveness of the

Chemical Weapons Convention, as well as to the security of our own country. The adherence of North Korea to, its ratification of, and its full compliance with the Convention will significantly reduce the threat of chemical weapons in the region.

My delegation would like to note that the decision by the Special Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention to establish an ad hoc group to consider appropriate measures to strengthen the Convention, including verification measures, constitutes a step forward in eliminating weapons of mass destruction. The last two sessions of the Ad Hoc Group held this year in Geneva, have proved to be very useful in providing an exchange of views among participating States.

My delegation hopes that the international community will redouble its efforts to adopt effective implementation and verification systems under the Biological Weapons Convention through the active participation of Member States and their cooperation and spirit of compromise.

As for transparency in armaments, we support the efforts of the Conference on Disarmament to enhance transparency and openness in the field of conventional weapons. While the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms has been a useful mechanism, we are of the view that universal participation in the Register will be the key to success. In this regard, we urge all other States to participate in the Register as early as possible.

Due attention should be paid to the anti-personnel land-mine issue. It is a well known fact that land-mines are particularly menacing in the context of post-conflict society. The danger and uncertainty caused by the presence of land-mines hamper the repatriation of refugees, obstruct the delivery of critically needed humanitarian relief and assistance, and slow down the reconstruction and rebuilding of the national economy. We believe that the urgency and gravity of the global land-mine problem was well addressed at the International Meeting on Mine Clearance held in Geneva in July 1995. We also believe that many constructive ideas for the strengthening of Protocol II of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects were presented at the Review Conference of the States Parties to that Convention, which ended its session in Vienna just a week ago. My delegation wholeheartedly welcomes these endeavours by the international community to control deadly weapons, and commits itself to participate actively in these efforts.

For this reason my Government, through the Foreign Minister's statement to the General Assembly on 28 September 1995, officially declared a one-year moratorium, which may be extended, on the export of anti-personnel land-mines. We hope that other States will follow suit and consolidate the efforts to help alleviate the human casualties and economic costs of he use of land-mines.

With respect to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, my delegation would like to re-emphasize that preferential treatment in the transfer of nuclear-related technology and the stable supply of nuclear fuel should be granted to the State Party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) which complies fully with the Agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for the Application of Safeguards in Connection with the NPT. On the other hand, due restrictions and disadvantages should be applied to a non-party to the NPT. These measures are indispensable to the strengthening of the effectiveness of the current nuclear non-proliferation system.

We believe that the peaceful uses of nuclear energy can be promoted even further through the settlement of safety culture. In this context, the international legal regime relating to the safety of nuclear energy — for example, the Convention on Nuclear Safety and Convention for the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management — should be established as soon as possible.

As for the North Korean nuclear issue, which has posed a serious challenge to the NPT regime, the long-standing international efforts to resolve the issue have entered a new phase with the signing of the Agreed Framework between the United States of America and North Korea on 21 October 1994 in Geneva. We welcome the Agreed Framework as a positive step forward in the ultimate resolution of the issue. The freeze of nuclear facilities in North Korea, as stipulated in the Agreed Framework is being monitored without interruption by the International Atomic Energy Agency's inspectors under the mandate of the Security Council. Discussions are currently under way between the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization and North Korea on the provision of light water reactors in the context of implementing the Agreed Framework. My Government firmly believes that the ultimate resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue will be possible only when the DPRK fully complies with its safeguards agreement with the IAEA and lives up to its non-proliferation commitments under the Joint Declaration of Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, which came into force in February 1992, in

addition to the full implementation of the Agreed Framework.

We recognize that regional approaches to disarmament play useful complementary roles to global disarmament. The United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific at Kathmandu, in particular, has been an indispensable mechanism for the promotion of security dialogue within the region, where a region-wide framework for cooperation on security issues has been conspicuously absent. As an active participant in the "Kathmandu process" and one of the Centre's major donors, my Government strongly hopes that the activities of the Kathmandu Regional Centre will not be adversely affected by the Secretary-General's recommendation to close all three regional centres at a time when confidence-building through regional security dialogue is needed more than ever in this region.

My delegation is pleased to note that the importance of disarmament and non-proliferation has been well highlighted recently. Despite a few disappointments, our year-long endeavours have reaped some notable rewards, including the indefinite extension of the NPT and progress in the negotiation of the comprehensive test-ban treaty. Next year, we expect the conclusion of that treaty and the commencement of negotiations on the cut-off treaty. In addition, we also expect the Chemical Weapons Convention to enter into force and the Biological Weapons Convention to be strengthened through a verification regime. These are the critical developments which have moved us even closer to building a safer and more secure world for ourselves and future generations.

Mr. Ziauddin (Bangladesh): At the outset, may I congratulate Mr. Erdenechuluun on his election as Chairman of the First Committee. My delegation firmly believes that under his experienced leadership the work of this First Committee will reach a successful conclusion.

Since the inception of the United Nations, disarmament and the maintenance of international peace and security have constituted a focal point of its activities. The end of the cold war has had a positive impact on the international security environment, presenting an opportunity for strengthened cooperation in the areas of peace, security, disarmament and development. We have embarked on a new era of international relations, wherein we can tackle disarmament issues in a more focused and realistic manner. Throughout the past year, we have witnessed the further consolidation of the disarmament agenda: the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was extended indefinitely by consensus; and the implementation of START I opened the way for ratification of START II. It was also a year that saw progress in negotiations of a comprehensive test-ban treaty, with all five nuclear-weapon areas declaring they would sign a test ban before 30 September 1996. But progress was mixed on other disarmament issues. The entry into force of the Chemical Weapons Convention is yet to be achieved, and efforts are continuing to strengthen verification of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction, which is already in force.

An equally important concern is the widening of the North-South gap in socio-economic development. These non-military sources of instability in economic, social, humanitarian and ecological fields pose real threats to international peace and security. Our quest for peace and security must take these socio-economic realities into account, for they are the underlying causes of conflict. This lends a true sense of importance and urgency to the tasks of this First Committee.

For us in Bangladesh, general and complete disarmament is a constitutional commitment, and we believe that the ultimate goal of arms control and disarmament is to ensure security at all levels of disarmament. We remain committed to the goal of general and complete disarmament and non-use of force in international affairs.

General and complete disarmament is not a single task in itself but an entire process containing many individual challenges which the members of the international community must face together, as a whole, step by step. The first step, and therefore the one currently accorded the highest priority, is the completion of a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty.

The achievement of a comprehensive test-ban treaty has remained, since 1957, a major United Nations challenge. With the meeting of this challenge, the prospects for the realization of all other disarmament goals will be greatly enhanced.

Bangladesh joined in sponsoring General Assembly resolution 49/70, calling for the conclusion of a universal and multilaterally and effectively verifiable comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty. In that resolution the General Assembly reaffirmed that a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty was one of the highest priority objectives for the

cessation of the nuclear arms race and for attainment of the objective of nuclear disarmament. The resolution was adopted without a vote, and signalled the immediate relevance of a test an. Furthermore, a large part of the work of the Conference on Disarmament at its recent session was devoted to the question of a nuclear-test ban. It is an encouraging sign to see that the Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear-Test Ban was re-established and has continued its intensive negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty, working closely with a rolling text to maintain past agreements and to work towards consensus.

Disarmament measures, in order to be effective, must be universal, not only with regard to involvement of the entire international community, but also in the scope of their coverage. Under a comprehensive test-ban treaty, there must be a complete cessation of nuclear tests by all States, in all environments, and for all time, without any exceptions. This, of course, includes the setting of a zero-yield test ban and a verification system which is universal and non-discriminatory.

The decision of certain States parties to the NPT to resume nuclear testing pending the entry into force of the comprehensive test-ban treaty comes at a most unfortunate time. This step, taken soon after the completion of the work of the historic 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, conflicts with the document adopted by the Conference and its provisions on the Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament. These disturbing developments will not promote the development of positive trends which have recently been observed in the field of nuclear disarmament, most significantly in regard to the successful completion of the negotiations on the comprehensive treaty. We must consider the resumption of nuclear tests to be a threat to the implementation of other measures in the sphere of disarmament, especially the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Bangladesh reaffirms its strong belief that the immediate reinstatement of a moratorium on all nuclear tests would be most helpful in expediting the negotiating process on the comprehensive treaty, and strongly urges the nuclear-weapon States to exercise the utmost restraint during this crucial time.

In accordance with the fundamental principle of general and complete disarmament, we believe that disarmament knows no geographical bounds, and must be considered a priority on all levels — globally, regionally and bilaterally. Although progress at the international level has at times been limited, the regional and bilateral efforts in that direction, including those of the United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament, have been encouraging in their ability to halt the destabilizing arms build-up in certain areas of the world.

Bangladesh joined in sponsoring General Assembly resolution 49/72, calling for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South Asia. It is firmly committed to this concept and urges all States in the region that have not yet done so to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as non-nuclear-weapon States. It is our view that nuclear-weapons-free zones and zones of peace can supplement global efforts towards the ultimate objective of total elimination of nuclear weapons, allowing neighbouring States to devote themselves to the socio-economic advancement of their peoples.

A broad common interest has developed with regard to avoiding further proliferation and realizing the ultimate goal of the elimination of all nuclear weapons. As a party to the NPT, Bangladesh wholeheartedly subscribes to its provisions and accords the highest priority to nuclear disarmament.

Bangladesh is delighted that a strengthened NPT has emerged from the 1995 Review Conference. The Treaty remains invaluable, containing the only commitment from the nuclear-weapon States to complete disarmament. The progress of nuclear disarmament greatly depends on the expeditious implementation of article VI of the NPT. Bangladesh also applauds the enhanced cycle of review of the implementation of the NPT, and the unanimous adoption of a declaration of principles and objectives, providing the international community with a political and legal framework in which to work. The successful extension of the NPT for an indefinite period marks an important milestone in our collective search for a world of shared peace and security, and must be viewed as an inspiration for the successful completion of the work that lies ahead. Now is the moment of opportunity that must be seized and not allowed to pass.

As an observer State non-member of the Conference on Disarmament, Bangladesh is prepared to contribute to the major negotiations in the field of disarmament and with this end in view is seeking membership in the Conference. The expansion of the Conference on Disarmament must be seen as a matter of urgency, with a view, not only to increase the number of States directly involved, but also to

increasing the interest in, and momentum for, revitalization of the Organization and its concerns. My country is encouraged by the Presidential decision in the Conference on Disarmament to allow Bangladesh and 22 other States to become members of the Conference at the earliest possible date and calls for the expeditious implementation of that decision.

Bangladesh also fully supports efforts to eliminate other categories of weapons of mass destruction.

The uniqueness of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) in its complete and total disarmament nature is greatly appreciated as a positive step towards the principle of ultimate, general and complete disarmament. Yet the slow pace at which signatories are ratifying the Convention must be noted with concern. It is a matter of urgency that all States which have not done so sign and ratify the Chemical Weapons Convention, so as to bring it into force.

There were important developments in the biological weapons area, as well. Negotiations on a legally binding instrument that will provide the means of verifying the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) have moved one step closer with the establishment of a special committee to study proposals towards this end. Efforts should be made to develop a legally binding transparency regime before the convening of a review conference on the Convention late in 1996.

Bangladesh firmly believes that none of these measures should hinder international cooperation and trade in chemical and biological technology, including the elimination of chemical and biological technology export controls.

The carefully monitored transfer of technology for peaceful purposes can be of valuable service in underpinning non-proliferation regimes and socio-economic development by promoting the peaceful use of new technologies. Bangladesh endorses the idea of an international code of conduct to be established with supplier and recipient States to establish a secure environment in which to monitor the transfer and peaceful use of new technologies for socio-economic development.

Weapons of mass destruction naturally receive more attention than conventional arms, and yet excessive accumulations of such arms, not commensurate with a country's legitimate security concerns can also be a destabilizing factor as regards international peace and security. We must take a holistic approach to disarmament, thus including not only weapons of mass destruction but conventional weapons as well.

Bangladesh sincerely hopes for a continued decline in all world-wide military spending in excess of legitimate security concerns, with a significant portion of the resulting proceeds diverted to development purposes. This peace dividend will serve as an investment in the peace, security and well-being of future generations.

The non-military socio-economic threats to security cannot be overemphasized and should be considered on an equal footing with the military aspects of disarmament. Both developing countries and arms-exporting States should exercise the utmost constraint in their expenditure on, and exports of, weapons, respectively. States will then be able to adapt and convert military spending to civilian and socio-economic concerns so as properly to reflect post-cold-war realities and priorities and to provide for defence not in excess of legitimate security requirements.

We are of the view that a new, comprehensive and holistic approach to security, disarmament and development is needed at this time. All issues continue to be inextricably linked and inseparable. Every State and every region serves to play a role. An integrated approach, taking all of these factors into consideration, will allow the international community to work most effectively towards disarmament and security goals.

We must prepare for the new special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which has been agreed to in principle by the General Assembly and is planned for the late 1990s. That session will be a most propitious time at which to assess progress made in the follow-up to recent developments and a time for Member States to express their thoughts on the disarmament agenda at the end of the century and at the beginning of the next millennium.

Mr. Velliste (Estonia): Allow me to join previous speakers in congratulating the Chairman on his election to preside over the First Committee of the General Assembly at its fiftieth session and to express our recognition of the Vice-Chairmen and the Rapporteur. The Estonian delegation wishes them all success in performing their duties and discharging their responsibilities with regard to

some very demanding agenda items. I would like to offer them my delegation's full support and cooperation.

As is known, Estonia aligned itself with the statement made by the representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union and its associated member States. Thus, Estonia's position on crucial matters on the agenda has already been well expressed. However, I should like here to reiterate our position on a few basic items and to inform the Committee of Estonia's understanding of some points that are vital to it.

At the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Estonia expressed its view that the dismantling of nuclear weapons should be a steadfast goal. We should all view support for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons as a global norm. Estonia is of the opinion that reduction of nuclear weapons and facilities will not only lessen the threats of the abuse of nuclear weapons but also lessen the chances of nuclear accidents and blackmail. In this regard, I should like to recall the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Estonia in the course of the general debate at the fiftieth session of the General Assembly. He informed the General Assembly of the closure of a former Soviet nuclear-submarine training facility in Estonia just about a month ago.

Turning to the concept of national security, it has been suggested that this notion infers establishment of sufficient military power to deter invasions. Without prejudice to Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, the definition of national security should be redefined as cooperation among nations. Hence Estonia is of the opinion that disarmament should also be regarded as a process that delineates a new definition for the terms "national security" and "global security".

I should like to make a few observations on the following points which, in my delegation's view, are undermining the efforts of regional and international organizations in seeking peace and security.

Notwithstanding the efforts and achievements of international organizations in security matters, we still hear tactless threats of the use of military power against other States or groups of States. Such declarations contradict the principles of the United Nations Charter, in particular the provision that all Members should refrain in their international relations from the threat of the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any other State. Whenever such statements are voiced, they cannot be considered anything but provocative, revealing disrespect for the efforts of the regional and international organizations that are pursuing stability and peace. With this in mind, the relevant international organizations and the international community as a whole should consider appropriate measures to discourage such reckless statements by Member States and respond to them decisively.

Estonia supports further strengthening of the agreements on conventional weapons. It is our firm conviction that, at a minimum, States should stick to the limits of conventional arms envisaged by agreements accepted by a number of States. Using national-security requirements as an excuse for the need to increase the number of conventional arms will inevitably obstruct the very purpose of negotiations through which countries commit themselves to strengthening not only vital security guarantees but also a wide spectrum of economic and social issues. If conventions should be revised, then revision should be only in the direction of further lowering of the limits for conventional arms, and not of an increase.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to express its belief that decisions taken during the deliberations at this historic session of the General Assembly will support the disarmament process and give reinforced security to all nations of the world, be they big or small.

Mr. Neagu (Romania): I should like to extend to Mr. Erdenechuluun our sincere congratulations on his election to conduct the deliberations of this important body. I should like to assure him of the full support of my delegation in his endeavours to bring our debates to fruition. My congratulations go to the other officers of the Committee as well. It is also a pleasure to see Mr. Sohrab Kheradi as Secretary of the Committee.

At the outset, I should like to confirm my delegation's full alignment with the important statement delivered by the representative of Spain, Ambassador Martínez-Morcillo, at the beginning of the general debate in the First Committee on behalf of the members of the European Union and the associated countries, including Romania. This alignment reflects the firm determination of my country to integrate into European and Euro-Atlantic political and security structures and to make a direct contribution to the promotion of the values of this community of nations and to the creation of favourable conditions for stability, peace and security in Europe and throughout the world.

In this spirit, Romania actively contributed to the agreements for the reduction of conventional arsenals, real

transparency in military activities and increased confidence between States in Europe. The Open Skies Treaty, to which Romania is a Party, constitutes a cornerstone in the effort to overcome suspicion and mistrust. Romania also takes an active part in the North Atlantic Cooperation Council and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Partnership for Peace programme designed to consolidate stability, peace, cooperation and security in the region.

The year 1995 is an important one in the field of disarmament and security in the world. First of all, it has witnessed the historic decision taken at the Review and Extension Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to make the Treaty permanent. This decision, together with those on the Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament and the Strengthening of the Review Process for the Treaty, is a crucial event, not only for strengthening the non-proliferation regime, but also for the steady promotion of arms control and disarmament. The NPT is now expected to play an important, pivotal role in consolidating nuclear stability, non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the disarmament process, as well as in deepening world-wide cooperation in the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

Under the NPT, which has been extended indefinitely, and profiting from positive trends in the overall international climate, the world community should pursue without further delay several important goals: completion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty no later than by mid-1996, launching substantive and productive negotiations on a convention banning the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, and deepening the dialogue on increased security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States.

We are pleased to note that during the 1995 session of the Conference on Disarmament encouraging progress was achieved in important areas of the negotiations on a comprehensive test-ban treaty. My country attaches great importance to the drafting of treaty articles on an international monitoring system. Such a system, supported by efficient on-site inspections, consultations and clarification procedures, should be able to accurately detect suspect events and possible non-compliance. Nevertheless, major issues remain to be resolved, such as the scope of the Treaty, basic obligations, the structure of the international monitoring system, the financing of implementation activities and the organizational set-up of the future comprehensive test-ban treaty — its seat, structure and functions. Romania shares the view that the comprehensive test-ban treaty must ban all nuclear tests, everywhere and for ever. We welcome the recent decision taken by France and the United States, along with the United Kingdom, to support the zero-yield test ban as a major breakthrough in moving towards agreement on the article on scope.

According to the programme of action embodied in the document on Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, 1996 is expected to be the year the comprehensive test-ban treaty will be completed. In our view, this remains a perfectly attainable aim. The accomplishment of this objective requires consistent endeavours by all participating States to preserve and improve the international climate of mutual confidence. We welcome and appreciate the commitment of all five nuclear-weapon States to embrace a comprehensive test-ban treaty by 1996.

Romania is proud to be among those countries that have been resolutely supporting an early start of negotiations on the prohibition of the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons. My Government maintains the view that codifying the cessation of the production of nuclear weapons-grade materials in a legally binding instrument would reassure the world community that these materials were not being secretly produced or procured. Furthermore, it would advance the nuclear-disarmament agenda and curtail the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Conference on Disarmament should take up the issue of cut-off with no further delay and should focus, in the initial stage, on the questions of the scope and effective verification of the treaty, with the aim of ensuring its non-discriminatory character and universal adherence to it.

As regards security assurances for non-nuclear weapon States, we hope that, in pursuance of General Assembly resolution 49/73, conditions will be created for opening negotiations on a legally binding international instrument on the subject.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is indeed unprecedented as a global, comprehensive and verifiable multilateral treaty providing for the elimination of a whole category of weapons of mass destruction. At this stage, we believe renewed efforts should still be made to ensure the entry into force of the Convention and universal adherence to it and to prepare for the future implementation of this important legal instrument.

I am pleased to inform the Committee that the Romanian Parliament unanimously ratified the Convention

last November, and that the instruments of ratification have been presented to the Depositary. At the same time, measures have been taken with regard to implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, including the establishment of the National Authority and the preparation of a draft law on the enforcement of relevant provisions of the Convention.

Effective implementation of the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention has been precluded so far because of the lack of an effective verification mechanism guaranteeing international supervision of compliance. Along with other, like-minded countries, Romania is working towards the achievement of a draft protocol on verification, which, in our opinion, should provide for an effective set of measures, such as data exchange, export controls, national technical means, and routine and challenge inspections. We advocate the finalizing of this draft protocol as soon as possible, preferably by the time of the forthcoming Review Conference on the Biological Weapons Convention, to be held next fall.

We welcome the agreement achieved at the recently concluded Vienna Review Conference on the inhumane weapons Convention on an additional Protocol for the Convention which would ban the use and transfer of blinding laser weapons. At the same time, we regret that disagreement on certain aspects prevented the amendment of Protocol II for the protection of civilians from long-lived anti-personnel land-mines. Having already ratified the Convention, Romania is looking forward to making its full contribution to overcoming the present difficulties and adopting the long-awaited amendment at the next review conference.

Let me reiterate my country's strong belief that it is now time for the re-launching of a more concrete and businesslike debate on transparency in armaments, an issue that is always related to disarmament and international security and that poses an acute and dramatic challenge in today's international environment. We are deeply concerned about the chaotic, ever growing delivery of conventional arms in our region and in other parts of the world. Moreover, the pursuance of preferential conventional arms transfer policies could undermine the balance of forces — established either with the passing of time or by international agreements — in various sensitive regions.

The issue of transparency in armaments is indeed a rather complex and sensitive one because it relates directly to the security of States in a troubled, uncertain period, in which various regions of the world are affected by suspicion, instability and mistrust. However, the common awareness of risks and challenges should not inhibit but rather stimulate our determination to cooperate. We firmly believe that there is no valid reason for evading the topic. To the contrary, the problem of transparency in armaments needs urgent and close consideration.

In view of its complexity, the approach should be gradual, starting with conceptual aspects and advancing, step by step, towards more action-oriented measures. Taking into account these basic requirements, Romania has submitted to the Conference on Disarmament its proposal for a code of conduct for the international transfers of conventional arms. We have also welcomed similar ideas put forward by Australia, Ireland and New Zealand.

Essentially, the idea of a code of conduct is intended to bring about restraint and responsibility in transfers of conventional arms. It also envisages the preservation of the equal and undiminished security of States at the lowest levels of armaments. Basic principles of conduct and criteria to be followed in considering arms transfers, or to avoid transfers, as well as an appropriate mechanism for data-sharing and consultations should equally be taken into account when such an international instrument is being discussed. Obviously, the code of conduct should be open to all States to ensure full realization of its commendable goals.

Let us take action in this field and stimulate all international forums that are working on such a code of conduct, or examine the possibility of elaborating one to inform the Secretary-General of the United Nations about their activities in these directions.

Mr. Boang (Botswana): The delegation of Botswana congratulates the Chairman and the other officers of the Committee on their recent election. The election of Mr. Erdenechuluun of Mongolia by acclamation to the chairmanship bears testimony to our confidence in him, and it is a fitting tribute to his proven diplomatic skills. There is no doubt that under his able leadership we shall have satisfactory and fruitful deliberations during this the fiftieth session of the General Assembly.

The year 1995 is indeed historic, not only because it marks 50 years of the existence of the United Nations but also because of the landmark progress that has been made on the disarmament calendar. States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons unanimously agreed to extend the Treaty indefinitely despite some reluctance on the part of a number of the non-nuclear-

weapon States. They joined the bandwagon of indefinite extension because of two earlier decisions, which demonstrated the intention of one and all to honour their Treaty obligations. Here, I am, of course, referring to the mechanism "Strengthening the Review Process for the Treaty" and the "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament". And I wish to place emphasis on the latter.

In the Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, States parties called on the nuclear-weapon States to exercise utmost restraint with regard to nuclear testing. Unfortunately, the hopes and aspirations of the non-nuclear-weapon States were dashed when two of the nuclear-weapon States acted against the atmosphere of international understanding and cooperation that had been brought about by the indefinite extension of the Treaty.

It goes without saying that this continued nuclear activity does not augur well for the trust that was bestowed upon these States by non-nuclear weapon States at the Review and Extension Conference. Neither does such activity contribute to the creation of an atmosphere conducive to the speedy conclusion of negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty.

At the Review and Extension Conference, States parties also committed themselves to the conclusion of negotiations on a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty not later than 1996. The Conference on Disarmament should be encouraged, through its Ad Hoc Committee on a Nuclear-Test Ban, to conclude the comprehensive treaty expeditiously. It is also encouraging that the "true zero yield" option has begun to gain appeal among some nuclear-weapon States. As for Botswana, we are in favour of a test-ban treaty that would completely ban all nuclear testing, without exceptions.

Of equal importance to my delegation is the need to conclude at an early date a treaty banning the production of weapons-grade fissile material. The absence of such an instrument threatens to reverse our successes and achievements in the field of nuclear disarmament, since the continued production of nuclear weapons would be guaranteed despite the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

While we appreciate the significance of Security Council resolution 984 (1995) on security assurances, we maintain that the best insurance for us is a legally binding international instrument committing the nuclear-weapon States not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. Having forgone the nuclear-deterrent option, we have a legitimate right to the only other deterrent — a clear and categorical assurance that we shall never be targets of nuclear weapons, by whatever means and in whatever guise. We go further: nuclear weapons should never be used against anyone, because everyone else would become an unintended victim. The reluctance of nuclear-weapon States to work towards the adoption of such an instrument therefore remains a source of serious concern to us.

The aspiration of African countries, as in the case of Latin America and the Caribbean and the South Pacific, is to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in our part of the world. The conclusion of negotiations on the final text of a treaty on an African nuclear-weapon-free zone and the adoption by the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity of the Pelintaba Treaty bears testimony to our resolve in this regard. It is our hope that, as with the Treaty of Tlatelolco, nuclear-weapon States will extend the necessary support and cooperation for the establishment of an African nuclear-weapon-free zone.

The international illicit trafficking in arms is a source of serious concern. This malice not only aggravates the destabilization of States but also feeds the increasing spate of social ills in many countries. The increase in the rate of violent crimes and illicit-drug trafficking is directly related to the increase in this scourge.

It should be pointed out, however, that, without the international community's backing, the efforts of the afflicted but poor countries to avert the flourishing illicit trade in arms will be severely curtailed. General Assembly resolution 49/75 G is a welcome development in the fight against illicit trafficking in arms. The successful conclusion of negotiations in the Disarmament Commission on guidelines for international arms transfers, in the context of General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991, will also go a long way as a contribution to reducing, if not completely halting, international illicit arms trafficking.

Let me, in conclusion, express my delegation's satisfaction so far with the First Committee's current approach to its work. It can only be hoped that such an arrangement will enable the Committee to work effectively and help the Organization to scale down its ever-escalating costs.

The Acting Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): We have heard all of the speakers on our list for today. I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind members that, in accordance with General Assembly decision 34/401, statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes.

Mr. Kim Cheng Guk (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I wish to reply to the South Korean representative's absurd statement about our country.

As the world knows very well, our country had the bitter experience of the chemical-weapon attacks in the Korean war. That being the case, we are opposed in principle to chemical weapons. However, we are in a state of cease-fire, and we note that certain provisions of the Convention could be abused and used against us. It is illogical that the enemy, which is in a state of war with us, should urge us to sign the Convention.

The primary task on the Korean peninsula is to establish a new peace arrangement, and the signing of the Convention is our sovereign right. It is not a matter in which South Korea should interfere. Also, the South Korean representative said something about implementation of the safeguards agreement. We are now settling the nuclear issue with the United States. It can only be settled between us and the United States.

I think the representative of South Korea does not know that the key to the settlement of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula is the implementation of the agreed framework between the DPRK and the United States. South Korea has no qualification to speak of the nuclear issue on the Korean peninsula, as it has committed crimes against the nation by asking for the nuclear umbrella of foreign forces and has allowed them to deploy nuclear weapons on Korean territory.

The nuclear issue is not a matter which colonial South Korea should poke its nose in.

Mrs. Bourgois (France) (*interpretation from French*): I do not want to disappoint the expectations of this Committee by failing to exercise my right of reply once again. Today, once again, several delegations have criticized the last series of nuclear tests carried out by France. I shall limit myself to referring those delegations to my earlier interventions, concerning first, and in particular the fact that our action is in conformity with the spirit and the letter of our international commitments; and secondly, concerning the decisive progress towards a global, comprehensive ban on nuclear tests, to which my country contributed by declaring that we have chosen the zero option and by our decision to renounce nuclear tests once the present campaign is concluded, that is, even before the signing of the treaty which we all wish so much to see here and for which we have been sparing no efforts.

Mr. López (Philippines): My delegation wishes to speak in exercise of its right of reply to the statement just made by the representative of France. The Philippine delegation wishes to stress that any further nuclear testing is inimical to the promotion of the kind of international climate we need in order to promote further nuclear arms control and disarmament. Thus, we strongly condemn and remain resolutely opposed to any further nuclear tests anywhere on our planet, under any pretext or for any other reason, including the so-called safety and reliability of nuclear weapons.

We sincerely hope that the nuclear-weapon States in question will reflect carefully on the concerns and sentiments that have been so clearly expressed by the members of the international community, and most especially, by our friends and neighbours in the South Pacific who would be most directly affected by any hazardous consequences of nuclear testing.

We, therefore, wish once more to call upon the nuclear-weapon States concerned to come to their senses and seriously recognize their responsibilities in a global context by putting an immediate end to this nuclear scourge.

Mr. Park (Republic of Korea): I do not want to reiterate our position on the North Korean nuclear issue. But I would like to have someone make a brief comment on the chemical weapon issue. I am heartened to note that the North Korean delegation made a claim that they are against chemical weapons. However, I sincerely hope that North Korea can substantiate this point and prove transparency on the chemical weapons issue by acceding to the Chemical Weapons Convention as soon as possible.

The Acting Chairman (*interpretation from Spanish*): I now call on the representative of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea who wishes to speak again in exercise of the right of reply. I would remind him that his statement is limited to five minutes.

Mr. Kim Cheng Guk (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): Once again, I state that signing the Convention is our sovereign right. South Korea has no right to tell us what to do. South Korea should also, as a sovereign State, abolish all the chemical and nuclear weapons that are stockpiled on South Korean military bases, weapons which were brought in from outside.

The meeting rose at 5.10 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/50/PV.8

General Assembly
Fiftieth session

Official Records

First Committee
8th Meeting
Friday, 20 October 1995, 3 p.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Erdenechuluun (Mongolia)

In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. Hoffman (Germany), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda items 57 to 81 *(continued)*

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Acting Chairman: With the concurrence of the Committee, I propose to call on the representative of France, who would like to make a short statement on behalf of France, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Mrs. Bourgois (France) *(interpretation from French)*: I do indeed wish to speak on behalf of the delegations of the United States, the United Kingdom and France. Our three delegations wish to present to the First Committee the statement made jointly today by our three Governments concerning the Treaty of Rarotonga. This statement has a direct bearing on the concerns expressed in our Committee by a number of delegations.

I would like simply to read out the statement:

"The Governments of the French Republic, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America believe that internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones, on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned, can contribute to international peace and security. The 1995 [Non-Proliferation Treaty] NPT Review and Extension Conference recognized this fact and encouraged the creation of such zones as a matter of priority. The Conference also recognized that the cooperation of all the nuclear-weapon States and their respect and support for the relevant Protocols is necessary for the maximum effectiveness of such nuclear-weapon-free zones and the relevant protocols. In this regard, we are jointly announcing today our intention to sign the relevant Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga in the first half of 1996.

The Acting Chairman: I now call on Ambassador Luvsangiin Erdenechuluun of Mongolia, who will speak in his capacity as Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

Mr. Erdenechuluun (Mongolia) (Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission): Let me first say how pleased I am to see you, Sir, chairing this meeting of the First Committee. I believe it is my prerogative to say that.

In my capacity as the current Chairman of the United Nations Disarmament Commission, I have the honour to introduce the report of the Commission for its 1995 session, as contained in document A/50/42. As in previous years, the report consists of four chapters and an annex, setting forth the result of its deliberations on various disarmament items on the agenda during its 1995 substantive session. Chapter IV sets out the conclusions and reports of the subsidiary bodies, which duly reflect the status of deliberations on various disarmament issues that the Commission has achieved this year.

95-86383 (E)

This record contains the original texts of speeches delivered in English and interpretations of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to original speeches only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and be sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, Room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

The Disarmament Commission organized its 1995 session in accordance with the mandate set forth in paragraph 118 of the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1978, as well as the guidelines set by the reform programme entitled "Ways and means to enhance the functioning of the Disarmament Commission", which was unanimously adopted by the Commission in 1990.

It should be pointed out that, pursuant to the reform programme, the Commission at its organizational session decided to include three substantive items in its agenda. They are: first, "Process of nuclear disarmament in the framework of international peace and security, with the objective of the elimination of nuclear weapons"; secondly, "International arms transfers, with particular reference to General Assembly resolution 46/36 H of 6 December 1991", and thirdly, "Review of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade". Three working groups were established to deal with these agenda items.

The first item, regarding nuclear disarmament, has been generally considered the most difficult owing to the nature of the subject. Its wide scope further hampers efforts to reach agreement on certain specific topics for deliberations in depth. Thus it is not surprising that the Commission has not been able to make substantive progress on it during the past years. Although bilateral progress in nuclear disarmament has been made with START I and II and unilateral disarmament measures such as withdrawal of tactical nuclear weapons have been taken, multilateral forums, which have made considerable progress, have yet to conclude specific agreements in nuclear disarmament, particularly on issues such as a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty, security assurances, a cut-off of fissile material for weapons purposes, and appropriate procedures for the transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. These are, in fact, pertinent issues associated with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), especially the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference.

The item on nuclear disarmament had been prolonged for an additional year by the Commission with the hope that it would benefit from the success of the NPT Conference this year for a reasonable conclusion. However, the outcome of the 1995 NPT Conference — at which the Treaty was extended indefinitely but no agreement could be reached on a final declaration regarding implementation of the provisions of the Treaty — had a clear and significant impact on the deliberations on the nuclear issues in the Disarmament Commission.

The Commission thus failed to reach agreement on its item regarding nuclear disarmament and it ended up as the victim of the mixed legacy of the 1995 NPT Conference. Such a legacy had a similar impact on those nuclear issues inherent in the third item, regarding the "Review of the Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade" and failed to reach any agreement, despite the fact that it was possible for agreement to be reached on the other non-nuclear issues. As may be recalled, this appraisal of the situation was forcefully expressed by a large number of delegations in their concluding statements. A view expressed by many, which I fully share, was that the failure to reach consensus on two items this year should not constitute a pretext for calling into question the important role of the Commission in the field of disarmament.

On the other hand, Working Group II, on the item regarding international arms transfers, which the Vice-Chairman of the First Committee chaired, was able to agree on the scope and structure of the guidelines to be elaborated as well as on elements to be included in such guidelines. During the course of deliberations, it appeared that all Member States attached great importance to the issue, particularly the illicit arms trade, and that there is political will to reach agreement on various principles and on ways and means to deal with the issue. At the 1995 session, a good foundation has been laid and it is expected that the Commission will be able to conclude this item successfully in 1996.

With respect to the organization of work of the Commission in 1995, I am grateful to note that the implementation of the reform programme, with the cooperation of all delegations, has enabled the Commission to finalize the procedural and organizational matters on time, prior to the substantive session. In this regard, I believe that the pre-session consultations that were held were extremely useful and contributed greatly to the organization of the work of the Commission this year.

Another organizational issue is the number of the substantive agenda items for the 1996 session of the Commission. In view of the conclusion of two of the three substantive items this year and the availability of two slots for new items for next year, proposals should be put forward for consideration at the forthcoming organizational session of the Commission in December. It is therefore expected that intensive consultations will be required at this session of the General Assembly in order to finalize the decision at the Commission's organizational session.

Finally, I should not fail to express my gratitude to all delegations for their understanding and the businesslike manner in which they conducted the work of the Commission this year. Special tribute should be paid to the members of the Bureau of the Commission, in particular the eight Vice-Chairmen, the Rapporteur of the Commission, Mr. Alaa Issa of Egypt and the Chairmen of the three Working Groups, namely, Ambassador Luis Valencia Rodriguez of Ecuador, Ambassador Wolfgang Hoffmann of Germany and Ambassador Ibrahim Gambari of Nigeria, for their full cooperation and hard work in fulfilling the tasks entrusted by the Commission. On behalf of the Commission, I should also like to express thanks to the staff of the Centre for Disarmament Affairs for the valuable assistance, particularly to the Director of the Centre for Disarmament Affairs, Mr. Prvoslav Davinic, and the Secretary of the Disarmament Commission, Mr. Lin Kuo-Chung, as well as their colleagues serving as secretaries of the three Working Groups. On behalf of the Commission, I express my sincere appreciation to all other members of the Secretariat who assisted the Commission in carrying out its tasks.

Now I present the annual report of the United Nations Disarmament Commission as contained in document A/50/42.

The Acting Chairman: I thank the Chairman of the Disarmament Commission for his report on the substantive session of the United Nations Disarmament Commission held this year.

Mr. Yativ (Israel): It is a privilege for me to extend to Mr. Erdenechuluun my congratulations on his election as Chairman of the First Committee. The members of my delegation and myself wish to assure him of our fullest cooperation in the deliberations of this Committee. We are confident that the Chairman and the other distinguished officers of the Bureau will steer the work of this Committee with wisdom, skill and competence.

The international community has recently witnessed a remarkable development enhancing the momentum of the peace process in the Middle East. The Government of Israel and the Palestinian Authority have embarked on a new stage on the road to peaceful relations and reconciliation. Following the signing of the Declaration of Principles in September 1993, and the Gaza-Jericho Agreement in May 1994, Israel and the Palestinian Authority signed, in Washington on 28 September 1995, the interim agreement that prescribes the gradual broadening of Palestinian self-government in the West Bank. This breakthrough is another milestone facilitating the ushering in of a new era in the relations between the two peoples — an era of cooperation, mutual respect and common interests.

Building confidence is an absolute prerequisite for defusing tensions and hostilities. The long-desired goal of comprehensive and lasting peace in the region can also benefit from the enhancement of confidence-building. This in turn can lay the basis, at an appropriate time, for a meaningful process of arms control in the Middle East.

The multilateral talks are a central component of the peacemaking process. The Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security is dedicated to the task of seeking cooperative solutions to security problems pertaining to our region. At a time when the bilateral process is producing tangible results, it is necessary to recall that the multilateral talks are meant to complement the bilateral process. In our view, all States in the region have to join this forum and take part in the overall effort to address regional security problems.

It is also high time to recall and acknowledge the fact that the Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security is and will continue to be the exclusive forum for addressing matters of regional security. It is our hope that such acknowledgement not only by regional States but also by the United Nations and the international community at large. Problems of regional security can be addressed only by the States of a given region. Hence the concept of regionality is the cornerstone of our approach to the matters of security and arms control, and the Working Group is a good illustration of this — a point on which I should like to elaborate.

Israel has repeatedly declared its unqualified support for the principle of non-proliferation. It voted in favour of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) when it was adopted by the General Assembly. Israel also supports the indefinite extension of the NPT.

At the same time, Israel must give due consideration to its position on the nuclear issue. Support for the principle of non-proliferation does not prevent Israel from assessing its own situation. Given the volatile nature of our region, Israel continues to advocate the establishment, in due course, of a nuclear-weapon-free zone — freely and directly negotiated — including mutual verification and encompassing all States of the region. On the effectiveness of such an arrangement, the Secretary-General of the

United Nations, in his report on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, said:

> "A zone can be even more effective in this regard than the NPT, essential as that instrument and its IAEA safeguards systems are." *(A/45/435, para. 109)*

Israel looks forward to the day when conditions in the region will be auspicious for the launching of discussions on a nuclear-weapon-free zone. In progressing towards this end, Israel subscribes to the premise — a premise guiding the peace negotiations — that no issue can be settled in isolation, but that progress in one area, especially that of political accommodation, may lead to progress in other areas as well.

In this respect, Israel supports the following statement of the United Nations Secretary-General in his report of 25 October 1993:

> "... a nuclear-weapon-free zone cannot be conceived of or implemented in a political vacuum, separate from the process of mutual reconciliation." *(A/48/399, para. 22)*

Therefore, in Israel's view, a credible nuclear-weapon-free zone can only set the seal on a durable peace. It cannot possibly precede it. It needs to be recalled that, for the time being, there are regional States that still consider themselves in a state of war with Israel. That being the case, the nuclear issue must not be the subject of any premature attempt to apply an agenda or timetable that does not reflect the reality in the region or the relevant priorities that govern the peacemaking process.

Furthermore, when the nuclear issue is addressed, the process will take place in a regional context, and not in any bilateral framework. Israel's policy on the nuclear issue is therefore based on several principles. The first of these is comprehensiveness. The nuclear issue should be dealt with in the full context of the peace process, as well as of all security problems, conventional and non-conventional. The second principle is that of a regional framework. Nuclear non-proliferation will be achieved and secured only through the establishment of a mutually verifiable nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. Thirdly, there is the step-by-step approach. Practicality dictates that the process be begun with confidence- and security-building measures, the parties establishing peace relations and, in due course, complementing the process by dealing with conventional and non-conventional arms control, where priorities are assigned to systems that experience has proved to be destructive and destabilizing. The fourth principle is the primacy of the peace process. Negotiations on all issues concerning the security of the region must be free and direct, as they are, in fact, conducted in the bilateral and multilateral talks, within the framework of the peace process.

In this regard, the Secretary-General's report of 2 August 1995 on the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East says:

> "In this connection, the Secretary-General is pleased to note that the matter has continued to receive attention in the framework of the multilateral Middle East peace process, particularly in the context of the Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security." *(A/50/325, para. 5)*

Israel feels that the challenges to its security, as well as to the peace process, coupled with the volatility of the region, call for caution against any precipitate renunciation of its agenda for the realization of a Middle East nuclear-weapon-free zone. Israel cannot jeopardize its security. Solutions to regional problems need to be tailored to the needs of the region. In this regard, time has an important role to play.

On 3 March 1995 a joint declaration was made by President Mubarak, King Hussein, Israel's Prime Minister, Mr. Yitzhak Rabin, and Chairman Arafat. This stated:

> "within the framework of peace and reconciliation in the region, with enhanced security, economic prosperity and a higher standard for their peoples, the leaders reaffirmed their intention to achieve equal security and mutual confidence at lower levels of armament."

Notwithstanding its concept of regionality, Israel feels that, where appropriate, global arrangements can complement regional agreements. In March this year Israel acceded to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. The Government of Israel views this Convention as being primarily humanitarian in nature. As such, it has a supportive role to play at the regional level. The accession of Israel to the Convention on certain conventional weapons demonstrates that, where appropriate, regional-security, arms-control and disarmament agreements in the Middle East could be complemented by global arrangements. Therefore Israel hopes that all States in the

Middle East will accede to this Convention as an important step towards regional security and stability.

Israel has manifested a similar effort in respect of the global land-mines crisis. Of all forms of post-conflict crisis, this is undoubtedly is the most widespread and pernicious. Its scope and magnitude are of daunting proportions. Anti-personnel mines are, in effect, real weapons of mass destruction. Thus, mine clearance constitutes a serious humanitarian challenge facing the international community today. The continuing existence of such weapons haunts many countries and prevents both reconciliation and reconstruction.

Addressing the world-wide effort to reduce the damage caused by anti-personnel land-mines, the Government of Israel decided on a two-year moratorium on the transfer of such devices. Israel is also prepared to consider extending know-how and assistance where they are needed.

The principle of transparency in armaments should be supported by all countries of our region. However, as each country has different security considerations, perceptions on such issues differ. Since transparency in armaments has an impact on the security of the region, it is necessary to subject any security measures to relevant regional considerations. Measures such as the exchange of information, advance notification of certain military activities and the exchange of information on unusual military activities have been dealt with in the multilateral talks. This is a cooperative effort in confidence- and security-building that it is to be hoped will yield positive results and will contribute to the defusing of tensions.

As it has stated hitherto, Israel continues to maintain a constructive and positive attitude towards the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction. Israel has repeatedly called for the elimination of chemical weapons and the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free from chemical weapons. Israel was among the first original signatories of the Chemical Weapons Convention in January 1993 in Paris. Referring to our region, the Foreign Minister of Israel, Mr. Shimon Peres, said on that occasion:

> "The chemical Convention must refer itself to our region and the region at large must adhere to its principles and comply with its provisions."

We still hope that all States of the region will adhere to this Convention, which should be treated on its merits and its universality guaranteed. No linkage should be acceptable between this Convention and any other issue. Unfortunately, several States of the region are still armed with chemical weapons and we sincerely hope that this will come to an end. The abolishment of chemical weapons and the creation of a region free of chemical weapons are important to the consolidation of the peace process and the stability of the region.

Israel has on a number of occasions expressed its support in principle of a total ban on nuclear-test explosions. Consequently, Israel is playing an active role in the comprehensive test-ban treaty negotiations currently taking place in Geneva. Israel hopes that these negotiations will bear fruit and lead to a universal and verifiable convention that will totally ban nuclear-test explosions. Israel believes that the future organization to be set up under the convention should enable each State party to exercise its rights in the various organs on an equal and non-discriminatory basis. A global and universally applicable comprehensive test-ban treaty will no doubt play a supportive role at the regional level as well. Hence, Israel expects all States in the Middle East to adhere to the treaty as an important step towards regional security.

Israel's bold decisions within the peace process and the actions it takes in the multilateral Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security and in non-proliferation issues in general demonstrate its positive contribution to peace and the goal of non-proliferation.

Let me conclude by saying that this is indeed an opportune moment in the history of our region which augurs well for the solution of regional problems and the achievement of peace and stability. It is incumbent upon us to use this momentum for further progress and at the same time to inculcate in all a sense that the peace process in all its facets, bilateral and multilateral, deserves the unqualified support and encouragement of the international community.

The United Nations is celebrating its fiftieth anniversary. This is an auspicious and unique opportunity to bestow its unreserved support upon the peacemaking process and thus contribute to peace and reconciliation in the region.

Mr. Moher (Canada): Let me first congratulate our Chairman and you, our Acting Chairman, on your elections to the responsible positions you hold at this historic session

of the First Committee. We look forward to working with you and others to make this session a positive one.

Each year, as we begin our work in this Committee, we should recall our Charter-given responsibility

> "to consider the general principles of cooperation in the maintenance of international peace and security, including the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments [and to] make recommendations with regard to such principles".

This is a task that continues to be vital and challenging as we adjust our efforts to address the broad international security agenda both to encourage and reinforce the positive evolution of its underlying structure and to counteract negative developments. We must, accordingly, focus on each of these. What can we do concerning the former? What must we do in confronting the latter?

In addressing the former, we must pursue measures designed to confirm and reinforce progress made in recent years in transforming the earlier confrontational global agenda. While differences and tensions will never wholly disappear, we do have a greater opportunity for cooperation. As regards the latter, we must acknowledge that the possibility of significant conflict, regionally and internally, remains. Our action list, therefore, is clear.

We must continue to make progress in reducing the past, present and future risks posed by the proliferation — vertical and horizontal — of weapons of mass destruction. The past should not dictate the future. We must build on steps taken to reduce the risk of conventional conflict and we must accelerate efforts to build cooperation and cooperative structures. This demands national and multilateral action, each reinforcing the other.

Turning first to weapons of mass destruction, we must re-devote ourselves to two simple objectives: reducing the number of existing weapons and preventing the spread of such weapons. This requires the following:

As regards nuclear weapons, Canada accords great importance to our decisions in May 1995 to extend the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to adopt the statement of Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament and to initiate strengthened reviews. Canada wants to ensure that this package of decisions is fully implemented.

Nuclear testing by all States must cease now. Moreover, a comprehensive test-ban treaty by mid-1996 is an essential and vital goal, attainable if we commit ourselves to that end. The treaty must ensure the definitive and binding end to nuclear testing that we all seek.

The Conference on Disarmament should move forward on substantive negotiations in 1996 on a convention to cut off the production of fissionable material for nuclear weapons. The two major nuclear-weapon States must continue to reduce their nuclear inventories. START I must be fully implemented; START II must be ratified and implemented; START III and beyond must become real objectives. Other nuclear-weapon States must join in the reduction of nuclear arsenals and we must encourage progress in establishing and reinforcing nuclear-weapon-free zones. In this regard, we welcome the statement made by the Ambassador of France a few minutes ago in this Committee.

Canada hopes strongly that we will be able to deal with each of these in a positive and pragmatic way in the weeks ahead. In doing so, we have to remain keenly aware of two other priority areas.

As regards chemical weapons, I am pleased to announce that Canada's Foreign Minister, André Ouellet, recently deposited Canada's instrument of ratification for the Chemical Weapons Convention, making Canada the thirty-ninth State to do so. The entry into force of this Convention is an urgent matter and we again call on all States to ratify the Convention as soon as possible.

On biological weapons, we welcome the work of the Ad Hoc Group designed to strengthen the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction and look forward, in particular, to its conclusions on verification measures. The fourth Review Conference of the Convention, to be held in 1996, must be instrumental in bolstering confidence in the effective implementation of that Convention.

While we must address the ambitious programme I have just outlined, we must also make progress on conventional weapons. First, Canada is deeply disappointed that the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or To Have Indiscriminate Effects did not achieve what was within our grasp: a meaningful broadening of the scope of the Convention to include

internal conflicts, prohibitions and restrictions concerning land-mines, especially anti-personnel mines, provisions governing transfers and an appropriate inquiry-compliance mechanism. Canada continues to advocate the elimination of land-mines, recognizing that this goal will take a considerable time to achieve; the objectives just cited are attainable steps in that direction. Thus, while we welcome the conclusion of a new Protocol banning the use of blinding laser weapons — and you, Mr. Chairman, played a particularly key role in that regard, and I congratulate you for doing so — the overall lack of results from the Review Conference is very disappointing. When we resume our work in January in Geneva we must deliver substantively on all the issues mentioned above.

Secondly, we should enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. For the calendar year 1994, only 83 Member States have submitted data. Our goal is universality. In 1997, experts will gather again to discuss the performance and necessary evolution of the Register. Many of the relevant issues are not new. Canada favours the expansion of the Register to include military holdings and procurement through national production. And once we have ensured transparency, we should move to enhanced consultations on the basis of the data and information then available.

To promote the universalization of the Register, Canada will be circulating for the use of Member States a short paper describing the way in which Canada compiles and submits its data, including our interpretation of the categories. This paper, which we would describe as a "user's guide", is designed to be a helpful tool, which we hope will assist countries in compiling their data. My delegation would also like to share informally with Member States another document which we believe may be useful as background material for those interested in the Register and the broader issue of conventional arms transfers — an annotated bibliography of publications on the Arms Register.

In looking at conventional weapons, we should keep in mind the linkage between military expenditures and development. The accumulation of arms and the creation of large military establishments in any country can fuel situations of tension and divert resources from necessary social and economic development. Mechanisms to reduce the risks posed by regional and internal tensions, as well as restraint on arms expenditures, should be our twin objectives.

Against the background of these comments, Canada will be asking for the support of all Member States on four draft resolutions which we will present to this Committee, relating to the Chemical Weapons Convention, cut-off, verification, and science and technology.

On the Chemical Weapons Convention, we will be seeking support for a consensus resolution calling on all States to sign and ratify the Convention and to work for its early implementation. On cut-off, we will be seeking a consensus resolution supporting an early start — in 1996 — to the negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament.

On verification, we are seeking recognition of the report on the role of the United Nations in verification which was prepared by a Group of Governmental Experts over the past two years. This is the only expert report to be submitted during this fiftieth anniversary session of the United Nations. The overall aim of this resolution is, within available financial resources, to advance in a positive and forward-looking manner consideration of the role of verification, in the United Nations system and more broadly.

On science and technology, we will be seeking support for a resolution to encourage wider dialogue with a view to establishing guidelines for transfers of science and technology for peaceful purposes. There is, we believe, general agreement on the importance of facilitating the transfer of science and technology while ensuring that such transfers are not turned to non-peaceful purposes.

In conclusion, I wish to emphasize that the Canadian delegation looks forward to working with the Chairman and all other delegations to achieve these goals.

Mr. Al-Hassan (Oman) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: There is no doubt that this fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations convenes at a historic juncture that requires us all to take stock of the Organization's past achievements and failures, for no other reason but the defining of those aspects that call for stronger efforts and solidarity on our part in order for us to attain the desired results.

Proceeding from this, and in view of the content of that most important of documents, the United Nations Charter, the main pillar of our work, we find that, notwithstanding the great efforts deployed in considering the issues of peace, security and disarmament, regrettably, the results that have been achieved so far fall short of our aspirations when the Organization was established 50 years ago. Weapons of mass destruction still pose a grave threat

to international peace and security; it can even be said that the threat has become much greater.

There is no doubt that the international agreements and instruments that have been concluded to date and have become an integral part of international law have had a far-reaching effect in limiting the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction and have been instrumental in shaping international expectations in this area. Those instruments, however, will ever be a legal mechanism whose effective use will always be the responsibility of their signatories.

Consequently, my delegation wishes to reiterate its call to all Member States effectively and completely to adhere to those agreements and instruments, to renounce any ambitions of domination and hegemony and to pursue policies of good-neighbourliness and peaceful coexistence with all other States of the world and their peoples. Such a stance will be conducive to guaranteeing the mutual benefits of States, to safeguarding the interests of their peoples and to promoting full respect for the sovereignty of States and non-interference in the internal affairs of others.

We pride ourselves on the fact that since the beginning of the 1970s, our country, the Sultanate of Oman, has opted for this rational policy which conforms with the objectives and principles of this Organization, and has made it the guiding principle of its relations with all other States.

With regard to nuclear weapons, we find that although the international community is agreed on the need to speedily rid the world of these overkill weapons of mass destruction, and although the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has been extended indefinitely, it has continued to be one of the paradoxical situations of our age that certain States have continued to believe that the possession of nuclear weapons is a factor of deterrence and balance.

This misconception is unjustified now just as it was in the past, during the cold war years. The international community knows quite well that the devastation caused by that overkill weapon when it was used for the first time should not be repeated. Therefore, the continued stockpiling, development and testing of nuclear weapons lead to nothing but the perpetuation of that threat in the service of short-sighted objectives and ambitions of States, that seek to possess, or to continue to possess, such weapons.

My delegation, while urging all States to renounce the possession of nuclear weapons, calls for the intensification of efforts to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty that would promote the globalization of the non-proliferation regime on a non-selective basis and promote technological exchanges in the nuclear field for peaceful purposes.

With regard to the Middle East, while we welcome the recent positive developments in the region — the signing in Washington of the second phase of the peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, and the upcoming economic summit in Amman, the Jordanian capital, at the end of this month, October 1995 — we hope that the natural step that follows will be a realistic in-depth study of the important issues, especially those which would lead to ridding the region of all weapons of mass destruction and ensure strict respect for the international borders and sovereignty of all the region's States. In this regard, my delegation wishes to reiterate its call to all the countries of the region to engage in serious dialogue and constructive negotiations with the aim of translating into concrete reality the proposal of declaring the Middle East a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. Until such time as this objective is achieved, all the States of the region should refrain from any hostile acts that could damage the ongoing peace process or overshadow future prospects.

With regard to chemical weapons, I should like to note that Oman's signing on 2 February 1993 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction was the result of our close study of the preparatory work done in this respect at the level of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, and of our participation as an observer in the preparatory work that led to the conclusion of this Convention which we consider to be unique in that it aims at removing an entire category of weapons of mass destruction on a non-selective basis, without any discrimination between countries, large or small.

Proceeding from our belief, in the Sultanate of Oman, that this Convention is one of the important tributaries of regional and international security, we call upon those States which have not yet ratified the Convention, to respond, at the earliest, to the call made on 16 October before this Committee by the Executive Chairman of the Preparatory Commission of the Organization on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Mr. Ian Kenyon, so that the Convention may take effect and lead to the establishment of a lasting peace in many areas of the world.

One of the major issues to which my country attaches special importance is the question of the security of the

region of the Indian Ocean, since we are a part of that region and have always been involved in its affairs. We participated in the United Nations Preparatory Commission on the implementation of the Declaration by the General Assembly of the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace, and we believe that every effort should be made to reach an understanding conducive to the desired results. We should like also to appeal to all the countries of the Indian Ocean and those that use it to spare no effort in translating the constructive proposal into reality in the interests of all the region's peoples.

The idea of collective security has taken on great significance in the international arena. It is highly regarded by the members of the international community and particularly by small countries, which consider this Organization to be the main pillar of the new world order and the entity most able to translate that idea into reality.

Our era is clearly not very different from previous ones. What is new about it, though, is that humanity, through various international laws and thanks to this Organization, has been able to establish legal rules of a mandatory nature to limit the threat of war and to make our planet more peaceful and secure.

In conclusion, we in the Sultanate of Oman agree with the view that disarmament and international peace and security are intertwined and complement each other in such a way that any progress towards the one is bound to have a positive effect on the other. The world today is called upon, more than ever before, to maintain that security, a duty that will be discharged only through international solidarity amongst all Member States. The main responsibility in that regard devolves to the States that possess huge military arsenals, which should reduce those arsenals through the application of the rules of international law and the conduct of relations between States accordingly. Let us try to create a more peaceful and stable world in the next 50 years of the life of this Organization.

Mrs. Samaté (Burkina Faso) (*interpretation from French*): I should like to take this opportunity to extend to Mr. Erdenechuluun the warm congratulations of the delegation of Burkina Faso. I should like also to extend these congratulations to the other officers of the Committee. You can be assured of my delegation's wholehearted cooperation.

My delegation will be presenting its views on certain items of our agenda in the course of the thematic discussion and we would like to share with the delegations that have spoken earlier some of our concerns and observations.

Fifty years after the founding of the United Nations, five years after the end of the cold war, general and complete disarmament is far from accomplished. More and more the world is witnessing the spread of tension, which only serves to intensify proliferation and the spread of weapons of all types. Today, there are countless examples of this in Africa, in the territory of the former Soviet Union, and elsewhere.

My delegation welcomes the unanimous adoption of the decision for the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). This extension should provide definite momentum for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. We would appeal to the nuclear-weapon States to do everything they can to reduce such weapons, although the ultimate objective is still their complete elimination.

Nevertheless, my delegation is still convinced that the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, particularly for development, must be maintained and promoted. Burkina Faso says this in the belief that cooperation in this field must be encouraged, so that it may become as widespread as possible. In this regard, we would encourage those countries which possess such technology to broaden still further the traditional scope of such cooperation.

My delegation is also convinced that a moratorium on nuclear testing would greatly help to strengthen international peace and security. Such a moratorium would speed up the negotiations and the conclusion in 1996 of a multilateral comprehensive nuclear test-ban treaty. On the question of the jurisdiction of fissile material for weapons purposes, Burkina Faso would like to see a convention banning such production for military purposes. It would be desirable, therefore, for greater cooperation to be developed between States possessing nuclear weapons and those that have the potential to acquire such weapons, so that we can control and restrict the spread of fissile material. After more than three decades of appeals and support for the creation of a nuclear-weapon-free zone on its continent, Africa has just acquired a juridical instrument for this purpose. Burkina Faso would appeal to the nuclear Powers to support the expression of this political will, with a view to its consolidation.

Almost all the hot spots on our planet demonstrate the excessively injurious nature of certain conventional weapons which have indiscriminate effects. The Convention

on Prohibitions or Restrictions on Their Use must be seriously put into effect. The manufacture, sale and use of anti-personnel land-mines should be prohibited. Burkino Faso regrets that discussion on this question was adjourned in Vienna only a few days ago. Here and now we call for the halting of the use of laser weapons, particularly those which lead to irreversible blindness.

Like other Saharo-Sahelian States on the African continent, Burkina Faso has, for some time now, been prey to the problem of the circulation and proliferation of illegal small arms, because of the very freedom of their circulation in the subregion. This constitutes a serious threat today to the populations of these countries. For that reason we became a sponsor of resolution 49/75 G, adopted on 15 December 1994; and in February 1995, we welcomed the Secretary-General's advisory mission on this question. We therefore await with very definite interest the conclusions of this mission.

We wholeheartedly endorse control of conventional weapons at the regional level. However, we regret the proposal for the closing of the regional disarmament centres. It is inconceivable to contemplate such a measure at the very time when the importance of a regional approach to disarmament is becoming ever more widely recognized.

The current political situation opens up broad prospects for disarmament in favour of development — a proposal which, unfortunately, has not gone beyond the stage of a pious hope. On this fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, developing countries, like Burkino Faso, are quite rightly anxious to see, at last, the dividends of disarmament devoted to development. This would also help to strengthen international peace and security. My delegation therefore calls for some meaningful thought to be given to disarmament for development.

Mr. Afeto (Togo) *(interpretation from French)*: Allow me to join previous speakers in expressing to Mr. Erdenechuluun, on behalf of my delegation, our sincere congratulations on his unanimous election as Chairman of the First Committee. I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to his predecessor, Mr. Luis Valencia Rodríguez, the Permanent Representative of Ecuador, who skilfully conducted the work of this Committee during the forty-ninth session. Lastly, we wish to express our congratulations to the other members of the Bureau, to the Secretary of the Committee, Mr. Sohreb Kheradi, and all of his colleagues for their dedication to the cause of disarmament.

The current session which, happily, coincides with the commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, is for our States and Governments a very special opportunity to test our political will and ability to promote the conditions necessary for the United Nations to attain the objectives of disarmament, peace and security, which it set itself. In the past five years, in a new era emerging from this cold war, the world has witnessed many positive events in the field of disarmament and international security. By way of example, I would mention the ratification and the entry into force of START I and START II, the renewal by some nuclear States of their unilateral moratoriums on nuclear testing, the signing of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, and the signing, at the regional and subregional levels, of a number of agreements on peace, disarmament and non-aggression.

Last spring, the Review and Extension Conference of States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was held. As is known, that work led to the indefinite extension of the Treaty. While welcoming the consensus that was achieved on this decision, many countries, including my own, believe that this indefinite extension cannot be considered to be an end in itself, nor should it be an opportunity to seek to perpetuate its discriminatory nature. On the contrary, it is urgently necessary to do everything possible to ensure that, despite the shortcomings one might find in it, the Treaty contributes to a real strengthening of the non-proliferation process.

My delegation hopes that the results of the next review conference will be more edifying so that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) may attain its goals and be assured of universal accession.

My delegation believes that, far from giving grounds for breaking off dialogue, nuclear-test explosions should prompt the Conference on Disarmament to speed up the negotiations under way in order to ensure, as has been agreed, the conclusion of a comprehensive test-ban treaty in 1996. My country, which favours the zero option, therefore invites the participants in these negotiations to redouble their efforts and to display mutual understanding in order to overcome their differences so that the treaty can become a reality, preferably before the end of the current session.

Togo notes with satisfaction the recent establishment by the Conference on Disarmament of an Ad Hoc

Committee to negotiate a treaty on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. My delegation hopes that nuclear Powers will devote greater attention to the need to draw up, as soon as possible, effective international arrangements to guarantee that non-nuclear-weapon States are protected against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

As the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation stated at the 4th plenary meeting of the General Assembly, on 25 September 1995, during the general debate, nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament must continue to be our main objectives during the post-cold-war period. My country attaches very special importance to the establishment of denuclearized zones throughout the world and, in this connection, welcomes the adoption by the Heads of State and Government of Africa in Addis Ababa last June of the final text of a Treaty on an African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone, which the Secretary-General in his report contained in document A/50/426 of 13 September 1995 has submitted to our Committee and the General Assembly for approval.

The delegation of Togo wishes to take this opportunity to invite the international community as a whole to give this treaty which is called the "Pelindaba Treaty" and its various protocols all the support it needs so that we can meet our objectives. We also welcome the entry into force of the Treaty of Tlatelolco and the adoption at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons of a principle relating to the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone and a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. We hope that similar measures will be taken for the establishment of similar zones elsewhere in the world.

The delegation of Togo therefore welcomed the statement made this afternoon by the delegation of France announcing the intention of France, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America to sign the Treaty of Rarotonga during the first half of 1996.

With regard to chemical disarmament, my delegation welcomes the signing by 159 countries of the Chemical Weapons Convention which has so far been ratified by 40 States. My country, which is a signatory, will ratify the Convention in the near future.

Togo is concerned at the use of certain conventional weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects, particularly anti-personnel land-mines, which with every passing day claim countless victims throughout the world, particularly among the civilian population. My delegation, while welcoming the decision taken by many States to adopt unilateral moratoriums on the export of such mines, regrets that the recent Review of the States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects, held in Vienna, was not more successful, apart from the adoption of Protocol IV prohibiting the use of laser weapons. Here, my country would like to reaffirm its commitment to support any initiative designed to strengthen controls on the production and use of mines.

Transparency in the field of weapons is, in the opinion of my delegation, an essential condition for the creation of a climate of confidence among different regions on the one hand, and States of the same region on the other. In this respect, my delegation welcomes the Register of Conventional Arms which is kept by the Secretariat. We reiterate our support for the activities conducted in this context and sincerely hope that its scope of application will be extended to include other data and categories of weapons.

The many positive developments I have just mentioned show that mankind is slowly but surely moving towards general and complete disarmament, which is our dearest hope. However, the race is far from over.

The burgeoning proliferation of conventional weapons, their uncontrolled and illicit sale, excessive stockpiling and the anarchic circulation of small weapons, are now a constant threat to peace and security at the regional and subregional levels. Even more than in the past, the many internal and inter-ethnic conflicts and the different acts of subversion and banditry are maintained by these weapons which, without rigorous action by the international community to control such trafficking, will, for a long time to come, jeopardize any efforts to achieve disarmament and development in our respective regions.

In the face of this curse, a regional approach to disarmament is the best way to help curb this problem. It is therefore important for our States to give the regional approach due importance. It is essential here to re-energize the work of valuable bodies such as United Nations Regional Centres for Peace and Disarmament in Africa and Asia, and for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, in his report on the three Regional Centres, contained in document A/50/380 of 25 August 1995, recognized and strongly emphasized the importance of the role that such institutions can play in drawing up, at the regional level, confidence-building measures, measures to strengthen social and political stability and the security of States, and to help in the limitation and neutralization of existing arsenals.

My delegation believes that none of these regional activities can be effective and produce the desired results without the contribution and active participation of regional centres which are not, at present, able to carry out their activities properly because of inadequate financial resources.

As you know, the Centres were supposed to operate on the basis of voluntary contributions from States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations and foundations. In addition to these voluntary contributions, the General Assembly, pursuant to paragraph 4 of resolution 46/37 F of 9 December 1991, decided that to continue to ensure the financial viability of these centres, their administrative expenditures would be financed from the regular budget of the United Nations. It is regrettable to see that neither Member States nor the Secretary-General have provided these regional centres with the financial support they deserve. The case of the Centre for Africa is particularly alarming. Apart from Togo, which despite its limited means has made huge efforts to cover the arrears in the expenses of the administration, only Algeria, Finland, France, Italy, Norway and Sweden have paid contributions for 1995. My delegation wishes to avail itself of this opportunity during this debate to extend our warmest thanks to the Governments of these six countries.

The Regional Centres are in danger because of the huge financial difficulties facing the United Nations. Given the situation, the Secretary-General said in his report that he would sadly be obliged to suspend the activities of the three offices unless States Members of the United Nations took the necessary measures to regularize the situation. The Secretary-General has sounded the alarm but the bell has not tolled yet.

It is therefore our duty, while there is still time, to save these Centres and to ensure their survival by placing at their disposal the necessary means of action. It is in the interest of the peace and security of our respective nations and regions.

Let us save these Centres, for in order to be effective, regional disarmament activities cannot be conducted at a distance by officials based in New York or Geneva or elsewhere, as recommended in the report of the Secretary-General.

My delegation sincerely believes that the three Centres, without exception, deserve better treatment and to be kept in operation. The task appears to be difficult but the cause is no less just nor is it less in conformity with the goals of the Charter.

Togo is still convinced of the usefulness of these Centres. Their role is of more than prime importance in this period following the cold war, particularly in the field of preventive diplomacy and the peaceful settlement and management of disputes. Given the re-emergence of internal conflicts, which constantly bathe our countries in blood, the General Assembly has a duty to expand the field of activities and the mandates of these Centres so that they may be better able to respond to the requirements and to the rapid and constant changes taking place in the world.

Taking all these considerations into account, my delegation reiterates its support for the three Centres, particularly the Regional Centre for Africa, and urges all Member States, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, foundations and all individuals of good will to envisage, here and now, the possibility of contributing in whatever way possible to the collective effort to inject new dynamism into these Regional Centres.

In this respect, my delegation hopes that the draft resolution on this question, which will be submitted jointly by the representatives of the three regional groups with the support of other interested States, will enjoy the unanimous support of delegations for keeping these three Centres in operation.

Since they are linked to development, peace and security are today, as never before, jeopardized more by non-military situations than by armed conflicts. In our common search for an exact and updated re-definition of the concept of security, it is important for us to turn our attention, not towards military deterrence as during the time of the cold war, but towards the search for appropriate and lasting solutions to the various problems which threaten the existence of our populations and which undermine the development of our States. Hunger, disease, drugs, unemployment, social exclusion — these are a few among many other problems, including the arms race, which must be taken into account if we are to establish a true climate

of peace and security in our States and regions so that mankind, freed not only from the spectre of war but also from an uncertain future, may be able to live in freedom and help to build a better world and promote economic and social progress.

Mr. Alkubaisi (Qatar) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: I am pleased to express to Mr. Erdenechuluun our congratulations upon his election to the chairmanship of our Committee. I am convinced that his experience and broad knowledge of questions relating to disarmament will be an earnest of the success of the work of the Committee. I should also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election and express my best wishes for their success.

The road to disarmament is lengthy and arduous but indispensable if the world is to enjoy lasting security and stability, in view of the fact that security and stability are linked to economic and social development and that development requires financial and other resources which are swallowed up by the arms race.

The State of Qatar, like all other countries of the world, calls for according a high priority to nuclear disarmament. That is the reason why the overwhelming majority of countries supported the extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) for an indefinite period. The parties to the Treaty also approved many recommendations foremost among which was the need to ensure the universality of the NPT. Among the measures that would lead to such universality is the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones, particularly in regions where tension and conflicts prevail.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones that would be free also of all other weapons of mass destruction is a question of the highest importance in the area of international security.

The State of Qatar, along with other Members of the United Nations, should like to see the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East. My country supports the establishment of such a zone in the Middle East as one of the important measures of arms control in the region.

In his report (A/50/325) the Secretary-General stated that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East is a question that continues to receive attention in the framework of the multilateral Middle East peace process particularly in the context of the Working Group on Arms Control and Regional Security.

The State of Qatar had the honour of hosting from 2 to 5 May 1994, the fifth meeting of this Working Group. A number of the participating States made concrete proposals on ways to continue examining the question and the Secretary-General expressed his satisfaction with regard to the resolution on the Middle East which was adopted without a vote at the Conference of the Parties to the NPT. The resolution stated that the Conference:

> "Endorses the aims and objectives of the Middle East peace process and recognizes that efforts in this regard, as well as other efforts, contribute to, *inter alia*, a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons as well as other weapons of mass destruction," and
>
> "Calls upon all States in the Middle East to take practical steps in appropriate forums aimed at making progress towards, *inter alia*, the establishment of an effectively verifiable Middle East zone free of weapons of mass destruction, nuclear, chemical and biological, and their delivery systems, and to refrain from taking any measures that preclude the achievement of this objective."

The Conference called on all States parties to the NPT, particularly the nuclear-weapons States, to extend their cooperation and do their utmost to help the States in the region establish, as soon as possible, a nuclear-weapon-free zone that would be free also of other weapons of mass destruction and of their delivery systems.

On numerous occasions, the State of Qatar, along with other States of the region, has stated that it is committed to the establishment of such a zone, in keeping with the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament and with relevant General Assembly resolutions, the most recent being resolution 49/71, which was adopted by consensus on 15 December 1994. The recent positive developments in the Middle East peace process have created conditions which favour the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region. It is obvious that the establishment of such a zone, along with arms limitation in general are among the principal objectives of the peace process. The achievement of those objectives would work in favour of peace and prosperity for all the region's peoples.

It is not contestable that regional security should be ensured for all States on an equal footing, in all its

dimensions. Today, no State can build its own security alone by its own means. Therefore, the maintenance of security in the region is the responsibility of all the countries of the region, without exception. Proceeding from this, the State of Qatar hopes that all States in the region which have not yet become parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) will accede to the Treaty and will refrain from developing, producing or testing nuclear weapons or acquiring them by any other means and will renounce nuclear weapons. Qatar hopes that all States of the region which have not yet done so will soon place all their nuclear facilities under the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as an important confidence-building measure and a forward step in the process of promoting peace and security.

We share the concerns expressed at the IAEA General Conference held in September 1995 with regard to the existing grave threats to peace and security created by ongoing nuclear activities in the Middle East that are not solely for peaceful purposes. Similarly, the Conference welcomed initiatives for the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones and for the prohibition of other weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons, in the Middle East, as well as other recent steps taken to achieve arms control in the region.

We feel that the efforts of IAEA to establish safeguards in the Middle East emphasize the urgent need for all States in the region to agree to implement the IAEA safeguards regime with regard to all their nuclear activities as an important confidence-building measure and as an important step in promoting peace and security within the framework of nuclear-weapon-free zones. We support the Agency's decision to invite all interested parties to undertake a serious examination of the possibility of taking concrete and appropriate measures to implement the proposal to create a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East subject to effective and mutual verification.

The advantages of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East are not confined solely to questions of international peace and security or to the consolidation of the disarmament process, particularly nuclear disarmament, at the global level. Indeed, the achievement of this goal has other advantages for all the States of the region in the economic and social spheres as a large part of the budgets of these States is swallowed up by the cost of armaments and the maintenance of large defence forces. If the peace process now under way achieves its desired results, that would facilitate the creation of mutual confidence and peaceful coexistence. It could also promote cooperation in various areas, which would make it necessary to continue to pursue efforts in the fields of armament and military preparedness and, thereby, free financial resources for the region's economic and social problems, raise living standards and make it possible for future generations to hope for a better future.

We have emphasized the importance of establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East to security and stability in the region and in the world, as well as to the region's economic and social development. In order for us to attain that goal, we hope that all States will redouble their efforts to achieve the greatest possible degree of *rapprochement* in the region with regard to these questions. We hope for serious discussions amongst the States concerned and look forward to the adoption of confidence-building measures. Support for and acceleration of the peace process will make it possible to achieve these goals and lead to the creation of a climate favourable to world peace and security.

Mr. Sulaiman (Syrian Arab Republic) (*interpretation from Arabic*): I am making this statement on behalf of the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, Mr. Ahmad Hallak.

The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations raises important questions about the Organization's achievements in the sphere of international peace and security, about the obstacles it has faced and continues to face and the need to enable it to play its role in the disarmament field as well as the need to restructure it in order to make it more democratic and thus more responsive to the great changes that have taken place in the international arena, especially since the end of the cold war.

The indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has deprived it of the important obligations contained in its article VI and has legitimized the possession of nuclear weapons. It is regrettable that the Review Conference was unable to adopt a final declaration and that by failing to do so it has reflected the substantive differences that exist between nuclear- and non-nuclear-weapon States.

My delegation has reaffirmed the need to establish a clear linkage between the extension of the NPT and the progress achieved in areas that would guarantee the elimination of nuclear weapons, halting of their production and liquidation of their existing stockpiles in all the world's countries without exception. My delegation has called also upon all States of the world, nuclear and non-nuclear, to

accede to the Treaty if it is to achieve its desired results. The universality of the Treaty is the principal objective condition that can ensure for it the credibility it needs if it is to succeed.

The issue of security assurances is of great importance since the assurances stipulated in Security Council resolution 984 (1995) have not created the necessary climate of confidence. While the obligations and responsibilities of nuclear and non-nuclear States have not been evenly balanced, the indefinite extension of the Treaty has perpetuated this imbalance.

Syria was one of the first Middle Eastern States Parties to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty in 1968. In 1989 it called for the Middle East to be declared, through the United Nations, a region free of all weapons of mass destruction, be they biological, chemical or nuclear. Israel, however, did not respond to that call, neither has it responded to the many calls by the United Nations, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Non-Aligned Movement and the Organization of Islamic States. The possession of nuclear weapons by any State in our sensitive region will continue to be cause for concern not only to the peoples of the region but to the world at large. We have repeatedly drawn attention to the danger of Israel's possession of nuclear weapons and its refusal to accede to the NPT or to subject its nuclear facilities to international monitoring and inspection, especially in the existence of the ongoing Middle East peace process. Accession by all States in the Middle East to the NPT would be a vital step towards turning the region into a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction.

My country welcomed the various nuclear disarmament initiatives. It has called for the reduction of nuclear weapons as a step towards the complete elimination of these weapons and of preventing the spread of the arms race to outer space. It has also supported the efforts aimed at halting the production of fission materials for the manufacture of weapons and has always considered a treaty on the prohibition of such production a step towards complete nuclear disarmament and the consolidation of the non-proliferation regime. It is vitally important that a comprehensive test-ban treaty be achieved by the end of 1996, and we hope this will be done.

Transparency in armaments plays an important part in disarmament. We therefore call for expanding the scope of the Register to embrace the national production of weapons of mass destruction, high technology with military applications and all types of conventional weapons. We also call for the well-balanced, non-selective, non-discriminatory application of the Register in order to guarantee the security interests of all States without exception. Such expansion of the Register will make it an international mechanism that would contribute to the consolidation of international peace and stability and promote the credibility of the Register itself.

It is high time the Middle East region enjoyed peace and stability. However, peace and stability can never be achieved by half-measures, by droplets of peace or by agreements that surrender the nation's interests. Israel's failure to abide by United Nations resolutions despite four years of negotiations constitutes a stance of defiance, not only to the Arabs, but also to the rest of the world. The latest developments in the peace process have shown that Israel does not seek a genuine, lasting and comprehensive peace that would put an end to conflict, occupation and settlement and guarantee peace and stability to all.

The aim of the United States' initiative on the basis of which the Madrid conference convened was the achievement of comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East on the basis of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace. It was on that basis that Syria opened the door for peace. It was also on that basis that Syria repeatedly committed itself to peace on the basis of the determining principles of the peace process. The negotiations between Syria an Israeli over the past four years have made it clear that Israel negotiates only with no other aim in mind but to equivocate and to elude the requirements of peace. In his recent statement to the General Assembly, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Syria expressed new hope for peace by saying:

> "This is our hope. Peace which is not achieved today will dawn tomorrow. This is what we shall try to achieve looking forward to a better life of justice and humaneness in that it will be built on cooperation between our nations in the political, economic and cultural fields, in the interests of all mankind.
>
> "Let us hope that the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations will be a bright beacon of change in the history of mankind." (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 16th meeting, p. 18*)

The establishment of a conceptual link between disarmament and development by giving an impetus to more accelerated progress on the issues of global

development will strengthen the roots of international peace and security and preserve the spirit of understanding, constructive cooperation and genuine political goodwill which are essential for the building of a better and more secure world.

Mrs. Ataeva (Turkmenistan) (*interpretation from Russian*): Permit me sincerely to congratulate Mr. Luvsangiin Erdenechuluun on his election as Chairman of the First Committee and to assure him of our full support and cooperation.

The strengthening of international security, consolidation of regional stability and deepening of the disarmament process, as well as the issue of overcoming the bipolarity of the world, still remain on the agenda of our universal international Organization and its First Committee. Today those problems have acquired a new dimension and pose yet another challenge to mankind in its never-ending quest for peace, harmony and prosperity.

Overcoming the effects of the cold war is linked to the very complex process of eliminating its vestiges, which appear in the form of regional and local conflicts with their attendant problems such as weapons transfers and illegal drug trafficking. The instability still existing in many regions of the world hampers the economic, social and cultural development of States and the establishment of good-neighbourly relations and mutually beneficial cooperation.

Along with other newly independent States, my country is faced with similar obstacles that prevent it from fully realizing its creative potential, which is rooted in its domestic stability, the skill and industriousness of its people, its wealth of natural resources and its sincere desire to cooperate with its neighbours in the region and with all the nations of the world.

As our country is located at the very heart of a vast region comprising Central and South Asia, the Caspian Sea region and the Caucasus, we feel the hot winds from the conflicts that are still on the agenda of the United Nations. Turkmenistan is a small, peace-loving nation that is not involved in any of the existing conflicts or disputes. Good-neighbourliness, peaceableness and neutrality have been the fundamental tenets of our foreign policy ever since our establishment as a sovereign nation.

However, history abounds with grim examples of small States, such as my country, being drawn against their will into the maelstrom of conflicts. By learning the lessons of history and following the national traditions, outlook and will of its people, my country, under the wise leadership of President Saparmurat Niyazov, made its historic choice: to follow a policy of permanent, constructive neutrality. This means that Turkmenistan is ready and willing to play an active part in the peace-making processes carried out under the auspices of the United Nations.

This fundamental tenet of our foreign policy was spelled out in a statement by the President of the country and enshrined in its principal legal document, the Constitution. On 16 March 1995 the Majlis, or Assembly, of Turkmenistan adopted a resolution in which it endorsed this principle as the basis of Turkmenistan's foreign policy.

The momentous decision to follow a policy of permanent neutrality has been recognized and supported by the States of the region. During the summit meeting of the Organization of Economic Cooperation held in Islamabad in March of 1995, this historic choice made by Turkmenistan was endorsed by the Heads of State and Government of our region. The Government of my country is grateful to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for the support he has given to our policy of permanent neutrality.

By persistently seeking to endorse this principle of permanent neutrality in its foreign policy, Turkmenistan became a full-fledged member of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries during its summit meeting recently held in Cartagena, Colombia. In his statement, the head of the Turkmen delegation underscored the close affinity between the principles of non-alignment and neutrality, bearing in mind, in particular, modern trends in the development of international relations.

It is worth mentioning that the position taken by Turkmenistan was recognized and supported by the participants in the Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement. It was with appreciation that the Conference took note of Turkmenistan's desire to play a constructive role in a civilized settlement of the Afghan conflict and the intra-Tajik dialogue.

Turkmenistan is determined to follow its policy of neutrality and intends to actively develop mutually beneficial relations with all States of the world and, above all, with its neighbours. We are against an interpretation of neutrality as self-isolation and passivity. My country wishes to actively promote observance of the rules of international law as well as the principles of coexistence enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

When States choose to follow a policy of neutrality, it is their sovereign right and prerogative to do so. However, the importance of recognition for such status by the international community and of respect for it cannot be overestimated. In 1815, the Congress of Vienna laid down the foundations of the permanent neutrality of Switzerland, and the four Power Conference held in 1955 laid down the foundations of the permanent neutrality of Austria. The Government of Turkmenistan attaches great importance to the recognition of its policy of permanent neutrality by the international community through its highest forum — the United Nations.

In the course of the current session of the General Assembly, my delegation intends to submit a resolution on the permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan for consideration by the First Committee under item 81 of the agenda, entitled "Maintenance of international security". Consultations that I have been conducting on this question with my fellow ambassadors testify to their understanding of, and support for, the historic choice made by Turkmenistan and provide good grounds for optimism. I would like to take this opportunity to appeal to you to support my country's efforts by endorsing its policy of permanent neutrality. We are sincerely convinced that by following this policy our newly independent State will make a more tangible contribution to the maintenance of peace, security and stability in the world.

Finally, I would like to wish the Chairman and the First Committee every success in their endeavours.

Mr. Muhayrah (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Allow me, first of all, to join previous speakers in expressing to the Chairman and his friendly country my congratulations on his election as Chairman of this Committee. Allow me also to take this opportunity to congratulate the Vice-Chairman and the Rapporteur.

The First Committee of the General Assembly, which discusses questions of international peace and security and disarmament, meets now in the atmosphere of commemoration of the United Nations fiftieth anniversary. In view of the fact that disarmament cannot be dissociated from international security, the two issues have continued to figure on the Committee's agenda from the beginning to the present moment in time.

As one of the most important goals of the United Nations is to make the world renounce the idea of war and resort to peaceful means in settling disputes between States, it must be clear that the achievement of international security for all States can be brought about only through collective efforts that are inspired by shared human values which rule out hegemony, fanaticism and egoism.

Proceeding from this, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya attaches particular importance to the questions of disarmament and international security. This is given concrete form in the Jamahiriya's participation in deliberations on these issues and its adherence to the resolutions adopted by the United Nations treaties and its bodies and to multilateral treaties and conventions, in so doing, we proceed from the conviction that the production and stockpiling of weapons, particularly those weapons of mass destruction, pose a grave threat to international peace and security and constitute a source of terror for all mankind.

Our stand on the question of nuclear, chemical, bacteriological and biological weapons of mass destruction is unambiguously clear and has been reiterated on numerous occasions. Most recently, it has been spelt out in the statement made by Mr. Omar Mustafa Muntasser, the Secretary of the General People's Committee for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, before the General Assembly, on 3 October 1995, wherein he reaffirmed that:

> "The continued existence of nuclear weapons and the increased stockpiling of these and other weapons of mass destruction are among the principal concerns of the international community. When the first review Conference of the States parties to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) was held in the first half of this year, it was hoped that that Conference would lead to satisfactory results. However, what actually happened was that certain nuclear Powers brought to bear unprecedented pressures that made it possible for the NPT to be extended indefinitely. My country declared its opposition to this extension, and we remain convinced that extending the Treaty in that manner would never serve the objective of nuclear-weapon disarmament.
>
> "The NPT has not achieved universality, and its many shortcomings have not been properly addressed. In our view, ridding the world of nuclear terror will not be achieved through gains obtained by manoeuvres and unconventional measures, but rather through serious measures, which must be taken by the nuclear States. In this context, the procurement of nuclear materials must be ended, and nuclear States must commit themselves to a deadline for the complete

elimination of all nuclear weapons. These States should put an end to nuclear tests and conclude, at the earliest possible time, a comprehensive test-ban treaty. Furthermore, the nuclear States should demonstrate the political will required to conclude an effective treaty guaranteeing the security and safety of non-nuclear States.

"Another situation that requires speedy corrective action involves the unjustified restriction on the transfer to non-nuclear States of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. Above all, measures should be taken to guarantee the universality of the NPT. My country attaches the greatest importance to this issue, because the region to which we belong suffers from a security imbalance, owing to the Israelis' tremendous nuclear capability — they have more than 200 nuclear warheads and nuclear facilities that are not subjected to international inspection.

"This represents a threat to the security and safety of the peoples of the region. No one should keep silent about a situation of this kind or accept the extension of the NPT as long as such a situation continues." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 17th meeting, p. 16)*

My country welcomes the efforts deployed at the regional level to create nuclear-weapon-free zones, in Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. We believe that the conclusion of an agreement that would make the African continent a nuclear-weapon-free zone would be an important development which should be supported by all States.

Since 1974, considerable efforts have been made, on the initiative of a number of countries in the Middle East, to turn the region into a nuclear-weapon-free zone. Bearing in mind the conflicts that the Middle East has endured for such a long time, my country has supported the many resolutions on this matter, the latest of which was General Assembly resolution 49/71 of 15 December 1994.

However, this endeavour encounters a serious obstacle, the Israeli nuclear-weapon capability, supported by a great Power. If the desire to have this region turned into a nuclear-weapon-free zone is genuine, the international community — in particular, the great Powers that possess nuclear weapons — should prevail on the Israelis to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty, to subject their nuclear facilities to inspection by the International Atomic Energy Agency and to draw up a timetable for the destruction of their nuclear stockpiles.

With regard to conventional weapons, my country informed this Committee last year of the practical measures it had taken in disbanding the conventional army, demobilizing hundreds of thousands of troops and channelling their efforts towards development. This year, there has not been any budgetary allocation to armaments or military equipment.

My country welcomes the progress achieved at the latest Vienna Conference regarding the Protocol prohibiting the use of immoral and inhuman weapons which may cause permanent loss of sight. However, we regret that the Conference has not been able to make tangible progress in respect of the Protocol on anti-personnel land-mines.

As members of the Committee know, my country was one of the first to raise the question of land-mines and the sequelae of war. Libya's territory was the theatre of some of the largest land battles of World War II. Hundreds of thousands of land-mines were planted in our soil by the combatants. As is pointed out in document A/49/357, failure by the Allies and the Axis countries alike to remove these mines has resulted in huge damage and loss of life and has constituted a major obstacle to development projects. We have asked the countries concerned, bilaterally or through the United Nations, to provide us with maps of the minefields, to help us in the necessary demining operations and to pay compensation for the damage these mines have caused.

Our view of the gravity of this problem has been vindicated: it has become an issue which has been under consideration by the General Assembly since its forty-eighth session. The issue is now being considered comprehensively and not just from the perspective of mine clearance in different parts of the world. There is now a demand for discontinuing the production of such weapons and the prohibition of their exportation. We have participated in debating the issue at the 1995 Geneva Conference and have pledged contribution to the fund established for mine-clearance purposes.

Since the thirty-sixth session of the General Assembly, held in 1981, the First Committee has been seized of the item on the strengthening of international peace and security in the Mediterranean. We have approached some countries of the region with a view to having it turned into a zone of peace and security. In our opinion, that could be achieved only through the withdrawal of foreign military

fleets and the removal of the military bases of the great Powers. Nothing could justify the presence of those fleets now that the cold war is over and there is no longer a threat of confrontation between two camps. In some cases, such fleets have been used in overt acts of provocation and direct aggression. This is what happened to my country in 1986, when Libyan cities were subjected to aggressive and barbaric air attacks, which resulted in scores of casualties and widespread material damage.

As in previous years, my country will actively support any draft resolution intended to promote efforts in this field.

Ms. Damusis (Lithuania): Earlier this week my delegation aligned itself with the statement made by the representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union and the associated countries, including the Republic of Lithuania. As our foreign Minister stated at the General Assembly last month, Lithuania is striving for full integration into European political, economic and collective-security structures. Membership of the European Union, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Western European Union is a high priority. We look forward to continuing our cooperation with, and participation in, pan-European security mechanisms embodied in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, further developing the experience of the Baltic Round-table of the European Stability Pact, and in subregional efforts such as those of the Council of the Baltic Sea States.

With the easing of East-West tensions, real prospects for far-reaching disarmament agreements have emerged. Nevertheless, great risks to international peace and security remain. In today's dramatically changed world, regional and subregional issues have assumed additional urgency and importance in the field of disarmament and international security.

Very important advances towards peace have been made in Latin America, Asia and some parts of Africa. Progress in disarmament has been made in Europe with the establishment of comprehensive confidence- and security-building measures, followed by agreements for drastic reductions in heavy weapons and armed forces. Nevertheless, in other parts of the world the symptoms of the cold war have not yet fully disappeared. Military expenditures and sales of weapons continue to increase at an unbridled rate.

Despite significant successes -- for instance, the signing of the Chemical Weapons Convention, the decision to extend the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons indefinitely, the regional and global impact of the Treaty on conventional forces in Europe and the progress made in negotiations towards a comprehensive test-ban treaty -- much remains to be done. These positive developments in the field of disarmament and on the global scene have improved the international climate, creating new opportunities and conditions more conducive to peaceful development and cooperation world wide.

Regrettably, however, before these profound changes could take hold, new tensions and new conflicts arose between individual States, subregions and even larger parts of regions, shaking the very foundation of the present system of international security. Aggressive nationalism, violations of human rights and other forms of intolerance have led to bloody excesses in the former Yugoslavia, in the territories of the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and in Central Africa. The pursuit of regional approaches to disarmament has become all the more important in the face of these and other destabilizing situations.

Armed conflicts, as well as potential conflict-causing situations, are a constant reminder that the promotion of international peace and security can no longer be restricted to the prevention of a nuclear holocaust between the nuclear-weapon Powers or, at most, arranging cease-fires and the stationing of peace-keeping forces in areas of conflict between non-nuclear-weapon Powers. The focus must be on the creation of conditions whereby a potential conflict-causing situation would be dealt with before it could become a full-blown conflict. For that reason, arms control and disarmament have become an integral, comprehensive part of the international efforts to strengthen international peace and security.

Earlier disarmament efforts were directed towards stabilizing a precarious balance of power between two heavily armed alliances. Today, the new priority is to establish the highest possible degree of transparency and confidence among States, which would foster a new international security system. In this context, it is the firm conviction of Lithuania that States can make a genuine contribution to global security by refraining from the use or threat of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State or in any other manner inconsistent with the principles and purposes set forth in the Charter of the United Nations. The concept of "near abroad" does little to promote confidence and a climate of trust between States, particularly at the regional level.

Earlier this week, Slovenia noted that

> "While progress has been made on various aspects of the prevention and resolution of conflicts, there remains a substantial gap between the security requirements of the present world and existing international arrangements, which are mainly inherited from another and different era." (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, First Committee, 4th meeting, p. 4*)

We fully agree that we have yet to meet the challenge of a new Europe. New realities call for the creation of viable and effective security structures, including the enlargement of Western security arrangements to Central and Eastern Europe, as a way of avoiding a source of potential instability. As its contribution to the eastward expansion of stability and security and to the maintenance of international peace and security, Lithuania continues to foster good-neighbourly relations and to participate in the Partnership for Peace programme with a view to becoming a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Thus, the traditional approach to disarmament, working towards the reduction and elimination of the most dangerous and destabilizing types of weapons, needs to be supplemented by new dimensions of preventive diplomacy, which include conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace-keeping efforts. This dual approach, with an emphasis on regional arrangements based on democratic principles, is in Lithuania's view one of the key objectives of creating a new international security system.

Lithuania believes that the success of our disarmament efforts will be largely based on three major areas. First, there must be substantial reductions in conventional weapons and personnel. A huge amount of human and financial resources is still devoted to the production, acquisition and trade in conventional arms. The situation is further aggravated by the potential glut of weapons coming on the market as a result of the end of cold-war rivalries and domestic pressures, which call for the continuation of the production of excessive amounts of conventional weapons. In some areas bordering Lithuania, the excessively high concentration of armed forces and the ambiguous nature of their purpose is not in keeping with the new political-military realities of the region.

The second area is that of the development of policies to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons to new States. With the process of real nuclear disarmament having begun, it would be detrimental and dangerous if any new nuclear-weapon State were to emerge. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and compatible bilateral or regional arrangements are of supreme importance in this regard.

We are also alarmed at the numerous incidents of illicit trafficking in nuclear materials. The frequency of these incidents and the risks associated with them should compel the international community to take up coordinated efforts leading to the elimination of such occurrences. This problem appears to arise from an inadequate system of physical protection, deficient systems of accounting and control, and insufficient border controls on such material. International assistance should be encouraged, especially in cases where old safeguards are eroding or have fallen away or where nuclear materials are suddenly for sale.

The third area is that of the use of international mechanisms for keeping the peace and ending human tragedies, such as that now occurring in Bosnia. Lithuania continues to participate in United Nations peace-keeping operations. Since August 1994, three Lithuanian platoons have taken part in the United Nations Confidence Restoration Operation in Croatia within the Danish peace-keeping battalion. Lithuania is prepared to consider eventual participation in the peace-implementation operation in Bosnia.

The ideological division of the world was not defeated by military force but by the power of the human spirit. We are convinced that, against what often seem like insurmountable odds, the collective political will of States can help reduce tensions and find solutions to conflicts so that our world can become a more peaceful and secure place.

Mr. Çelem (Turkey): Let me begin by congratulating the Chairman on his election to preside over this historic session of the First Committee, which coincides with the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. I am confident that, under his wise and able leadership, this Committee will be successfully guided through its challenging agenda. I would also like to extend my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

We live in extraordinary times full of stark contrasts. On the bright side, the end of bipolarity freed the international community from political and ideological constraints. Today, a sense of global responsibility is growing. On the dark side, long-suppressed evil forces, such as xenophobic and ethnic nationalism, racism and intolerance have come to the surface, creating new

tensions, crises and conflicts. They constitute new threats to international peace and security.

The fiftieth anniversary is the most opportune time to revisit and recall the principles and ideals enshrined in the United Nations Charter. We must address the challenges of our times with the vision of the founders of this Organization. The main responsibility of the United Nations is, obviously, the maintenance of international peace and security, the prevention and removal of threats to peace. Fortunately, with the end of the cold war, the prospects for arms control and disarmament, as key instruments for greater security and preventive diplomacy, have improved considerably. Never before has there been a greater opportunity for global cooperative action to this end. We must seize it and address the challenges ahead effectively.

Last year we observed clear signs of progress in the realm of disarmament and global security. The decision to extend the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) indefinitely represents an achievement of historic significance. We were also pleased to see important progress on the road to achieving our common goal of universal adherence to the NPT. The decision on indefinite extension, which reflects a delicate compromise, should also be viewed in the light of the commitment undertaken by the nuclear-weapon States at the Review and Extension Conference of the NPT earlier this year. They have committed themselves to exercising utmost restraint in nuclear tests pending the entry into force of a comprehensive test-ban treaty.

In this respect, we continue to expect that nuclear tests will not adversely affect the timely conclusion of the proposed treaty. With this in mind, we have taken note of the announcement made in this regard. We welcome the commitment of France, the United Kingdom and the United States to a true zero-yield ban as significant contributions to the negotiations. Turkey supports the agreed objective of concluding a comprehensive test-ban treaty, which will have to be universal and internationally and effectively verifiable, no later than 1996. In this context, we continue to follow the negotiations in Geneva closely.

The next priority on the disarmament agenda should be an agreement banning the production of fissile material for weaponry purposes. Furthermore, the inefficiency in controlling the removal and transfer of fissile material has emerged as a serious problem in the post-cold-war era. We strongly believe that the time has come to adopt responsible policies and effective mechanisms to control the transfer of nuclear material. In this context, I would like to emphasize the fundamental role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We are committed to continuing our support of the ongoing process to strengthen the IAEA safeguards system through the 93+2 programme.

We also attach great importance to two other decisions adopted at the NPT Conference: the decisions on "Strengthening the Review Process for the Treaty" and on "Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament".

The proliferation of any type of weapon of mass destruction constitutes a serious threat to international peace and security. The Convention on the prohibition of chemical weapons (CWC) and the biological and toxin weapons Convention are significant international instruments which demonstrate the will of the international community to free the world from these types of weapons. The non-proliferation regimes regarding the weapons of mass destruction are vital for a safer world. However, it is equally compelling to strengthen these regimes by the addition of legally binding verification procedures to the relevant international instruments.

With this in mind, we have resolutely supported the strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention with additional verification provisions. We will continue to follow these efforts and hope that a conclusion will be reached at the next Review Conference, in 1996.

Turkey, as a signatory to the Chemical Weapons Convention, considers universal adherence to it vitally important. We are about to finalize the process of ratification of this Convention.

The eruption of ethnic conflicts has amply demonstrated the vital role of regional arms control and disarmament efforts in buttressing the global endeavour to enhance stability and security. The Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE), as the cornerstone of European security, has established a stable and secure balance at lower levels of conventional armed forces. Turkey took all the necessary steps for the implementation of the Treaty and expects all States parties to it to fully abide by its provisions. Any violation of such a critical international legal instrument will certainly create an atmosphere of mistrust, and this will obviously not be in the best interests of European security. It will adversely affect the climate of confidence which constitutes the basis of global security. Thus, it is our sincere hope that the States parties to the CFE will take full account of the global security dimension of this issue and of their responsibilities

in this regard before making their final decision on compliance with this Treaty.

The Middle East is especially important for my country in the context of the need to broaden the scope of arms control and other security-building endeavours to embrace all the regions of the world. Now the chances of achieving this noble aim in the Middle East are greater than ever. Turkey is actively participating in the multilateral track of the meetings of the Arms Control and Regional Security Working Group of the Middle East peace process. We are convinced that the difficulties faced on the way to the eventual realization of the confidence-building measures can be solved when progress is achieved at the political level.

Similarly, we sincerely hope that cooperation and confidence-building in Asia will succeed and contribute to international security. I would like to commend Kazakstan and Turkmenistan for their initiatives in this regard. We are fully cognizant of the potential of these efforts, and thus extend our support to them. We hope that in time these initiatives can be institutionalized and form the basis for developing concrete confidence-building measures suitable for the needs of the region. We expect that, in a true Eurasian spirit, all these efforts will be integrated into a whole.

Transparency in armaments is an important component of efforts aimed at building confidence and reducing unpredictability at a regional as well as at the universal level. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms is a key instrument in the efforts to increase international confidence. However, in order for this instrument to function effectively, all Member States must submit their reports. In order to ensure that all Member States submit reports for the Register specific methods should be developed to encourage Member States to do so. We also consider it important that the Register be expanded to include procurement from national production.

The Conference on Disarmament in Geneva is the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. However, owing to its cold war-design, it is structurally incapable of responding to the changing political realities of our times. The widely shared opinion is that the Conference on Disarmament should be expanded. Turkey strongly supports this opinion. The maintenance of the momentum created by the latest decision of the Conference on Disarmament (CD/1356) is significant for its prestige, and would secure fruitful results in the Geneva talks.

The fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations provides a historic opportunity for learning lessons from past experiences and preparing ourselves for the challenges that lie ahead. We have to continue to work together with a shared goal of making the world a better and safer place.

Mr. Cole (Australia): I have asked to speak in order to respond briefly to the welcome joint announcement made earlier today by France, the United Kingdom and the United States of America of their intention to sign the relevant Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga in the first half of 1996, thereby joining Russia and China, which had previously signed and ratified the two Protocols open to them.

The Australian Government warmly welcomes this announcement. Australia has been urging the importance and benefits of this step for some time. This concrete recognition of the positive role of nuclear-weapon-free zones augurs well for the further development of international peace and security in the aftermath of the Review and Extension Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and pursuant to the encouragement given there to the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones as a matter of priority.

The signing and ratification of the Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga by all of the nuclear-weapon States has been a major objective of the South Pacific Forum, and something for which the Australian Government has been working for a long time. The Treaty of Rarotonga is the principal institutional expression of the desire of all South Pacific countries to live in a region free of nuclear weapons and nuclear testing.

In our view, by signing the Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga, the United States, France and the United Kingdom will send a positive non-proliferation message to the entire international community and will help to drive the comprehensive test-ban treaty negotiations towards their successful completion within the first half of 1996.

I have to say that while Australia welcomes the commitment made by France to sign and ratify the Protocols, it does not lessen our resolve to see an end now to French nuclear testing in the South Pacific. Our goal remains an immediate cessation of such testing.

Mr. Markram (South Africa): My Government welcomes the joint statement made today by the Governments of France, the United Kingdom and the United States of their intention to sign the relevant Protocols to the Treaty of Rarotonga in the first half of 1996.

We further welcome their reference to paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 of the Principles and Objectives for Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Disarmament, which pertains to the recognition of the fact that the cooperation of all the nuclear-weapon States and their respect and support for the relevant protocols is necessary for the maximum effectiveness of such nuclear-weapon-free zones and the relevant protocols.

We look forward to a similar announcement being made by the nuclear-weapon States with regard to the African nuclear-weapon-free zone, and reiterate our call to the weapon States to sign the relevant Protocols of the African Treaty as soon as they become available for signature.

The meeting rose at 5.45 p.m.